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HIGHLANDERS:

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE HERMIT IN LONDON, HERMIT ABROAD, &c.

“Wherever I wander, wherever I roam,
My heart’s in the Highlands, my heart’s with my home.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE HIGHLANDERS.

CHAPTER I.

“No one knoweth what a day may bring forth.”

FLORA, in order to account for her long absence from home, and yet not violate the laws of truth, after keeping the carriage at a convenient distance from the lodging in Westminster, gave directions to be driven to Hyde Park, where she took one turn towards Kensington Gardens. It seemed, however, that she was destined upon all occasions to suffer or to see mishap, or to

be involved in adventures ; for she had not proceeded half way down the drive, when she observed a carriage that had just been overturned. Hearing the cries of a female, she stopped the carriage, and was instantly on the spot. A lady, dressed in the highest style of fashion, was bleeding profusely, and supported by two footmen in the livery of the Duchess of Tyndale. On approaching nearer, she found this to be the lady Grace, and still nearer, the lady Mary, with her wrist dislocated. Forgetting the insults which she had received at their hands, she had them conveyed in her own chariot to the house of a surgeon ; nor did she leave them till she ascertained that they were really more alarmed

than hurt ; and not, indeed, till the lady Mary herself had expressed a hope of reading the whole affair in the papers next day.

In return for this kindness on the part of Flora, the Duchess dowager of Tynedale, who had recently treated her as haughtily as a domestic, now offered to take her into the most intimate friendship, and make her the chosen companion of her three darlings. But Flora had seen enough of the Duchess and her darlings while in adversity, to make her little anxious to select them as her companions in prosperity. Besides, as she had the fond hope of returning soon to the land of her fathers, she was the less anxious to form new friendships in the metropolis ; and

indeed, the friendship of Mrs. Mac-lachlan was every thing that she could desire, although in the quiet solitude of that friendship she was occasionally haunted by dreams of the spectre figure which had hovered around her in so mysterious a manner. But we must attend to other matters.

Since Lady Golbourn's grand evening party, little else had been spoken of in the gay and extensive circle which that party had brought together. Its effect was like that of a midsummer sun, which, after it is sunk in the west, leaves an impression of warmth in its absence, and gilds, with its declining rays, a variety of objects on which it had shone with ardour, and which it had illuminated by its splendour. So

fared it with her ladyship. Cards fell upon her table like snow-flakes; new acquaintances introduced themselves; duns were silenced; her credit rose; and although every one wondered at her being able to support so splendid a mansion, yet the newspaper accounts of her fête, and the long list of Serene Highnesses, Excellencies, Graces, Most Nobles, Right Honourables, and Honourables, attracted the buzzing flies of fashion around her, and confounded the wits of the astonished trades-people. To offend her Ladyship, would perchance be to lose the custom of half the corps diplomatique, a brace of Cabinet Ministers, a score of Peers and Peeresses, and a groce of fashionable names,

which, like an army estimate, looked very formidable on paper.

The party was, in fact, a complete letter of credit; and as her ladyship was a great patroness of those who served her, if the purveyors of her fête lost the amount of their bills, they had each virtually an advertisement in all the papers, not only without expense, but in a column more fashionable than any which money could have bought them. “The supper furnished by Mr. Gunter surpassed any thing else of the kind; it comprised every delicacy and rarity of the season; and the style in which it was served, was the very *chef d’œuvre* of gastronomic elegance. The Cook’s Oracle itself furnished no prece-

dent for such a thing.” “ The service of glass was ample as the crystalline sphere itself ; and the cutting made it show as if banded with rainbows and studded with stars. Apollo himself never laid his celestial finger on such fiddles, or had the least conception that there was such fascination in music.” Such *agrémens* as these would have sealed the hundred eyes of Argus himself, or made the three-tongued keeper of hell-gate as mute as a gudgeon. Thus did Lady Golbourn give celebrity, while she got accommodation ; and in the devious paths of fashion, she is not singular.

Meanwhile Flora’s visits to her young charge were undertaken every day ; her attention and care were unwearied,

and her tenderness resembled that of a mother. In this, however, the pleasure which she received, was greater than that which she communicated; for the kind offices were done to one with whom she had spent her early days, and in whose breast her own fond secrets were hidden, ere death had concealed them in the grave.

The duty which she thus performed to the poor unfortunate, ought to have won praise for her who exercised it; but as the worm chooses the fairest bud for his ravage, so do the slanderers (a numerous and well supplied society of persons) ever fasten upon the purest characters: it may be, because they estimate the value of their labours by the height from which they tend to

cast any one down. By such persons observations were made, rumours were scattered ; Flora was traced home, and anonymous letters of fearful accusation and feigned regret were sent to the general's widow ; while the finger of scorn was pointed at the unconscious object of this injustice, and the mysterious figure in the cloak still haunted her steps, as though he had been the recording angel, taking note of her every movement.

At this critical juncture, the arrival of Castlecreaghy suspended, if it did not destroy, the machinations of those slanderers. The cause of his arrival was serious and urgent ; and little did he suspect how different would be the turn which accident would give to his

projects. On arriving at May Fair, he informed his respected relation, that having now ascertained the retreat of him who had at once destroyed the hopes and the life of Glenmore, and effected the ruin of Isabella, he had determined to meet him, and had sent notice of that determination. Flora besought him to spare, in the history of her house, this page of blood. She dwelt upon the implacability of such a deed ; the more noble virtue of christian forgiveness ; the small honour of triumphing over Lord Gerald, enfeebled and demented as he was ; the penitence of Isabella, and her disappearance from the world. The Highlander drew his hand across his forehead ; it cost him a struggle ; but all

that was left him of the family of his chief proposed the injunction, and that injunction he could not resist. After one or two grumbles, with which he took leave of his departing vengeance, he consented to listen to his fair kinswoman, and even to be the depository of a secret.

The secret which Flora had to communicate, or rather the boon which she had to crave, was safe keeping and safe convoy for one, who, but for her kindness, would have been an outcast from society, a lonely thing in the world, without kindred, and without name, a dependant upon the cold hand of public charity, an object for universal pity, unloved and uninstructed. She painted, in those colours which

were most congenial to the soft tenderness of her own heart, the sufferings, the tears, the contrition of a mutual relative, of one linked to them both by those ties of consanguinity, which, among Highlanders, are never slackened, far less broken; of one who, but for the machinations of a villain who had turned to vice and punishment the very virtue and tenderness of her nature, might have been an ornament to society, and, to her clan and kindred, a blessing and a comforter in the days of their sorrow.

While Flora laboured to impress these truths upon her rude but warm-hearted kinsman, she watched the expression of his features, as indicating the internal workings of his mind. His brows were

contracted, as if in deep thought ; and he was evidently trying, by fixing his eyes alternately upon all the objects about him, to take off the pain of that grief which tugged so forcibly within.

When every trace of anger had flitted from the iron brow of the Highlander, and when he stood a monument of the power of pity when woman pleads, Flora introduced her purpose, which was, that the little innocent, which had been in jeopardy of suffering for the sin of its hard-hearted father, should be taken to the mountains of the north, and there reared in virtue and in hardihood.

It was proper, she said, that this should be done ; that the child should be conveyed to the native hills of her,

whom, at the very extremity of ill, she could not cast off. The poor little thing had no mother, now that the portals of oblivion had closed upon her; and it would be prudent to throw a veil of fiction over the hapless story, lest the undeserved odium which, to the pain of their pure feelings, would attach to the mother, should also attach to, and blight the prospects of, the child.

At this proposal, a symptom of hesitation shot across the features of the Highlander; he knew no concealment and no dissimulation. Flora perceived it instantly, and instantly she set about checking its progress.

“ It will be easy, my dear kinsman, to usher him into life as the orphan of some son of the mountains, whose fa-

ther had fallen in the well-foughten field. He, too, might become the property of his country,—might defend the soil which had given him, but not preserved to him, a parent ; and all that I, in my own right, possess, may be his, as I, though an unwedded, am a betrothed widow.”

At these words, a tear bedewed the eye of Castlecreaghy, but that eye was too stern and too manly for being the portal of common symbols of grief. “ You shall not be an unwedded widow ; you shall not, by Heaven ! The stem of Glenmore cannot, must not, perish.”

He took two or three strides across the room, as long and as hasty as if he had been following the roe in his own

country, or the flying enemy in that of strangers. He passed his hand across his eyes, but he did it in a corner, and as if it had been a deed which could not bear the light. “I will provide for him,” said he. “We shall do it jointly,” said Flora, quite pleased that she had softened the heart of her kinsman; “we shall both do it, my dear cousin; and he shall never know either his father’s perfidy, or his mother’s shame.” “Good—very good,” said the Highlander, in a softened tone; “and his name?”—looking round with an inquiring and uncertain eye, for he knew not where to find a name free of reproach, and yet claimable by the child, except the name of the clan.

“Charles Edward Fitz James; so he

is baptized,” said Flora. “Charles Edward! and Fitz James! and baptized!—Glorious! He may yet be a brave warrior; he may——; but let us see him. Yet ere we go, pray——?” The question was so swelled in an instant, that he could not give it utterance. “Did Isabella——?” Again he stopped.

Flora was agitated in her turn; but she found relief in that process of nature to which the stern Highlander was a stranger. “Yes,” said she. “And said she any thing about me?”

“She craved your pardon, and your blessing.”

“She has them baith—she has them baith!” and with that he dashed both his hands upon his forehead, and cast

himself upon the sofa. It was some time ere he could utter any thing articulate ; but at last he arose, seemed ashamed of his weakness, and said, as if surly with himself, “ Why should a *man* live to see these days ? ”

“ Hush, Castlecreaghy,” said Flora ; “ are not these the days in which you see me ? and you perceive that I do not take it so.”

“ It is very true—it is very true,” said Castlecreaghy ; “ the tree will shew itself in the blossom ; and I will be guided by you.”

“ Then take courage : peace and the consolations of religion, if not of friendship, may yet be the portion of the reclaimed transgressor ; and the premature orphan, to whom we are not god-

father and godmother, but father and mother, by our own voluntary choice in the sight of God, may requite all our tenderness by a virtuous life, guide our steps when we are old and feeble, and close our eyelids when the spirit goes to a better and a happier country."

"So he may—so he may," said the Highlander, brightening up; "but it will be to me first, my dear cousin; and, oh! may it be lang and late, and short and easy, when it comes to you, my dear lady. But to our duty, so that we may deserve it. Daughter of Glenmore, lead on."

"Softly, cousin," said Flora; "we must beware, that by the eagerness of our movements we excite not the suspicions of Mrs. Maclachlan, from whom,

as I have concealed the matter hitherto, I should wish to conceal it altogether."

"You are right, lady ; you are always right," said Castlecreaghy ; "although Mrs. Maclachlan be our kinswoman, and a kind kinswoman she is, it would not be well to give her pain by knowing the dishonour of our kindred."

Flora rang the bell, and ordered refreshments for the traveller ; and sent to entreat of her kind protectress the use of the carriage, as she had to go out with her cousin to execute some commissions.

"No, no," said he, "Castlecreaghy has made use of his own twa legs too lang for riding in a wheeled cart or a hand-barrow ; and if you be not ashamed of the wearer, you will never

be ashamed of the cloth, (laying his hand upon the sleeve of his tartan) ; so we shall e'en trudge together ; and so we shall be free from the notice of these servant men, and can remain the langer without being suspected."

" Well counselled, my dear cousin," said Flora, " it shall be as you desire ;" and taking hold of the arm of her bold and brawny countryman, they set out for Westminster.

At the door of the house, the firmness of Castlecreaghy appeared a little shaken ; but he made no pause ; he rushed into the house as if he had been familiar with its inmates.

The landlady, and the nurse who attended the infant, were both astonish-

ed at the appearance and costume of the visitor.

“He is a near relation of the lady who left your lodging,” said Flora. The woman courtesied and drew back. The noise awakened the little adopted, who smiled and attempted to extend his little arms toward his best friend.

Castlecreaghy drew near the cradle, and bent down his head to examine the object of his adoption. “All poor Isabella, except——” said he; but recollecting that the nurse was at his elbow, he concealed within his bosom the other words, which, had they found utterance, had perchance been——“in crime.”

The infant screamed at his rough and stern appearance. Flora took it

in her arms, folded it to her bosom, and it was still. “Ah! if it had but been——” said he. He again recollected the presence of the nurse; and again he broke off in the middle of the sentence; but he had said enough to send through the heart of Flora a twinge of agony deeper than any which now the case of her lost cousin and the little innocent could have excited. She gave the child to the nurse, and in giving it, let it fall.

“Let us leave this place, in the meantime,” said Castlecreaghy. “Accustomed to the free air of the mountains, I can hardly breathe in the streets here, and far less within a house.” Flora understood the hint, and they withdrew.

When they had got upon the stairs, the Highlander grasped the hand of his kinswoman. "I will do all that you choose," said he.

To Flora's utter astonishment, the mantled spectre, which had been about for a few days, was close by the door, and seemed, as she came out of the house first, and apparently alone, (for Castlecreaghy had lingered, to pay his guerdon to the nurse and the landlady,) to be disposed to break that silence which had not before been broken, save by the mysterious word, "perfidious!" The Highlander, however, appeared in time to prevent any eclaircissement; and, upon seeing him, the figure started, muffled itself yet more deeply in its cloak, and stalked

off with the powerful strides which fabulists give to a warrior's ghost.

“ Gin I had been in the Highlands,” said Castlecreaghy, “ I would have sworn that that was a *wraith*, and I would have sworn whose wraith it was ; but it is long after the passing time, and those things could find nae hadding here for the antick tricks, and everlasting clatter of the living.”

Flora had some suspicions as to what might be her kinsman's meaning ; but she was afraid to inquire fully into it ; and so they returned to May Fair, preserving silence all the way.

Mrs. Maclachlan came down to welcome them, but there was agitation in her looks. These were excused by an anonymous letter, which had just been

received, and which evidently aimed at disgracing and ruining Flora in her estimation.

Mrs. Maclachlan, who knew Flora better than she could be known to the concealed writer of the slanderous epistle, did not for a moment suppose that guilt attached to her adopted daughter; but still the warmth and generosity of that daughter's heart might have made her the dupe of others. This tortured the good Lady, and the torture was increased by the story of the suffering *incognita*, into which she now regretted that she had not inquired.

As the subject was too delicate for breaking to Flora herself, it was first opened to Castlecreaghy; and his as-

surance, upon the honour of his name, his country, and all that he held dear, of the unquestionable purity and propriety of the head and conduct of his young mistress—for so, though an independent proprietor, he termed her—was quite satisfactory. He told her that he knew well the affair of the *incognita*, which was neither more nor less than to administer relief in secret to an unfortunate countrywoman, under circumstances which the delicacy of Flora would not allow her to make known to Mrs. Maclachlan.

After this there were no more anonymous letters, or, if there were any more, they failed in producing that mischief which their malignant writers intended.

CHAP. II.

“ If you will write, then Godsake put your name
to’t :

Without a name a writing is a cheat,—
A mere *ex parte* of an unknown pleader,
Which nonsuits reason through the lack of proof,
But leaves a bar i’the ’scutcheon.”

PETER OF GLOSTER.

THE most common objects of those who favour their neighbours with anonymous advices, are, to insinuate that which should not be known, or to hint at that which cannot be proved ; and therefore, the only effects which they produce, are, the occasioning of

misery, which cannot be removed, and the inflicting of wounds which cannot be healed. Their common signatures are, a *True Friend*, a *Well-wisher*, *Veritas*, or simply A. B. ; and, in such case, the very fact of the letter belies the signature. A *true* friend means, in this instance, one who is *false*, or who is a friend to nobody ; for a really true friend speaks out, and uses familiarity, though always within the compass of good breeding. A true friend is loyal and courageous, and would rather run the risk of open offence, than allow the object of his friendship to be deceived, injured, or imposed upon. Besides, it very seldom occurs that advice which is really valuable, whether spoken or written, needs any apology ; and, if it

be positively for the good of the person to whom it is given, and the giver have a right to offer it, it can never need to be concealed. An anonymous well-wisher is one who wishes well to the cause of dissention and disturbance, but who has not the courage to stand up manfully and disclose his wish. He is a cowardly incendiary, who, having stolen upon the unsuspecting in the dark, and kindled the destructive flame, sneaks away into a corner, and there enjoys in secret the progress of the conflagration. *Veritas* is a lie in masquerade ;—an impostor, who having disguised facts, for the purpose either of benefitting himself by another's loss, or of bringing down an innocent person to his or her level,

considers the word *Veritas* as a secure and classical cloak for his meanness and impertinence.

A. B. again is a very sweeping signature. It may be any body. It may be a blockhead—a brute, or a blackguard. Of these B.'s, the busy B., as not having any distinctive character, is perhaps, in its own nature, the most harmless; but it is so only while it remains in obscurity; for, if it meet with the least encouragement, it never fails to make love to, and seldom fails to marry, one of the more malignant B.'s. There is, in short, only one B. which can be tolerated in society, and allowed to mingle in respectable life without a reference, and that is the one which

takes the lead in all anonymous deeds of *beneficence*. The poet speaks of doing good by stealth, and “blushing to find it fame;” but the truly beneficent man never has occasion so to blush, for he does his good deeds so quietly, and is so perfectly satisfied with the pleasure of having done them, that he never finds them *fame*, in the common acceptation of the word; and hence he defies the world to make him blush. So much for sayings and doings that are anonymous; and this much being said, let us return to our narrative.

Those who had laboured to ruin the prospects of Flora and disturb the peace of her amiable and excellent pa-

troness by their unproved and malignant insinuations, having been completely foiled, tranquillity, in every sense of the word, was thoroughly restored; and the mansion in May Fair was as hospitable and as happy as ever.

The Highlander's fondness for his own country, and the necessity of his superintending his own concerns, as well as throwing a directing glance over those of Glenmore, rendered his stay in London, of necessity, short; but ere he left it, he had the satisfaction of seeing a letter which arrived from the penitent Isabella. This letter was of course intended for Flora's private perusal; but the penitence which it

evinced, the gratitude which it expressed, and the warm and kindly affection which it breathed, rendered it a pleasure, as well as a duty, to communicate the contents of it to one, who, though his affection for his erring kinswoman was by no means shaken, had still some scruples upon that point.

The letter had another quality which made its perusal valuable, but which threw over that value a melancholy tint of peculiar depth : It was Isabella's last farewell to the world,—the last time that ever her pen was to be permitted to express kindness and warmth for things on this side heaven. Upon the wide waves of the world she

had been tossed not a little in infancy ; it had been calm and smooth with her in the delightful retreat and dignified society of Glenmore ; but even in that retreat, the storm of temptation had arisen, the waves of passion had rolled — the poor girl, trusting to her own skill, and despising the pilotage of those who could have guided her through the storm—had been wrecked—engulphed—the waters had passed over her in all their mass and in all their coldness—by the merest accident she had escaped to a stilly land of religious exercise and religious privation ; and from that land she had no wish to look back upon a sea which, to her, had been a sea only of troubles.

It was painful, no doubt, to think of taking farewell of one so amiable in herself, who was entwined in the lovely and imperishable wreaths of so many fond recollections, and who had done so many and so substantial deeds of kindness ; and it was doubly painful to say farewell to that little innocent being, who she had once hoped would be the crown of her glory, but who had proved, in reality, the badge of her shame. Those cords of nature were strong : it was the laceration of all that a sister and a mother can feel,—it was crushing the enjoyment of the former in its blossom, and withering that of the latter in its bud ; but, before the united powers of contrition

for the past, and hope of forgiveness through future amendment and austerity, those strong cords were broken—or, if not broken, they were forced into concealment.

To Flora she wrote an adieu as tender, as affectionate, and as expressive of the agony under which it was written, as it was possible to write: of the other being she wrote not a word, but there was in the letter a tear-drop which had blotted out a begun paragraph, and that single drop was more eloquent than the labours of a thousand pens.

Although only in her noviciate, she had imposed upon herself the severest discipline, in order that she might punish that rebellious heart which had

erred so much, and whose errors seemed to herself,

“ A vast and numberless account ;”

and, in order that she might disturb her devotion by no longing and lingering look for the world, she had defaced, (as far as cutting off her hair, and wearing the plainest garb of her order, could deface,) the remainder of those charms which had won admiration, and, if she had guided them aright, would have gained her esteem, and a comfortable settlement for life in her native hills. To put her resolution to the test, and familiarize herself with her new life, in her last communication with her earthly associates, the greater part of her letter was devoted to an account

of her own mortifications and prayers. She continued, however, to beg earnestly for pardon from Castlecreaghy, although when she wrote she had no idea that he would look upon her letter with a forgiving eye, or indeed that he would look upon it at all. But he did see, he did forgive; and in both he was heartily joined by Flora, whose sorrow over this last communication from her cousin was deep and lasting.

In a few days he left London, taking with him the young Charles Edward, whom he brought up as his own child,—having introduced him in the north by the fictitious story which Flora had recommended. Need we add, that an excellent education and

habits of the strictest virtue, and the most active industry, were given him?

While Castlecreaghy was proceeding northward with his charge, and Flora was regretting his absence, or rather her own inability in the mean time to accompany him to the mountains; and while she was breathing one anxious prayer for the tranquillity of her convent-immured cousin and another for the safety of little Charles Edward, the newspapers were telling, in their largest types, and spotted with capitals and italics, the results of the mighty manœuvring of her grace dowager of Tyndale and the two graces her daughters. These diurnal ministers of scandal, among other things, announced (for the hire, we suppose, of one guinea a

head,) in all the pomp of heraldry and the pride of historic detail, the double noosings of one eventful day, which transformed the said two graces into the lady Balimahone and the baroness Verlewegen. Although in these hireling pages the genealogical tree was not sketched *ab origine*, as Hogarth has sketched it in his “Marriage a la mode,” yet all possible titles which had ever been claimed or merited, desired or possessed, by the Tynedale family or any branch of it, were mustered for the occasion,—as well as that of the Irish Peer, up to somewhere on the wrong side of the flood; and that of the Baron, through “Vleminckx, Platruckx, Eggerickx, Vanderheimalmann, Vanderaueveraard, Nieuuinha-

ouss, Kinkverusnkatzlebenschpraachengaschdaen, and so forth, till the jaws of half the wishing misses in town were nearly dislocated, and the teeth so disturbed in their positions and permanence, that the dentists reaped a very immediate and very abundant harvest. Nor was the *exposé* confined to this invasion of the mansions of the dead and the mouths of the living ; for the rainbow was robbed of its tints, and the flowers despoiled of their odours, to give colour and freshness to the illustrious brides ; and a pretty long bow was drawn against Plutus himself, in the allegation that they had most ample fortunes. Of the length of the Irish Peer's pedigree, and the names of the Belgian

Baron's ancestors, there need be no question ; for, as the Irishman himself said, " somebody must have been the father of every grandfather that was born to him," and as to the names, *vide* the red book of the red-breeched King of Holland ; but it would neither be safe nor handsome to meddle with the rainbows, and the roses ; wherefore all that we shall say on the subject is, if the two Graces had them, it was not till they had need. In the matter of Plutus, however, the happy husbands found to their costs that there were some trifling mistakes.

The Graces had incurred debts unknown to mamma ; mamma kept the purse and refused to pay ; and so the fortune-hunting hounds of noble breed

coursed after, and caught that, from which they fancied they were all the time receding.

The couples were however noosed, or, according to the more modern phrase, *executed*; and when the sentence of the law had completely taken effect upon them, they posted off, the one for the Priory and the other for Spa, until the honey-moon should begin to point her horns. She passed the full evening away, and changing her place, with that change changed also the prospects of the titled stems and the ducal blossoms. My Lord of Balimahone swore round every point of the compass, at the debts of his better half, and grumbled not a little, that her fortune, like his own

estate, showed best upon paper ; my lady considered herself fortunate enough ; but the peer assured her, in true Hibernian style, that he could not pay off a mortgage with a tune on the harp ; and this was touching a discordant string, the jarring of which put an end to the matrimonial unison. Thereafter the song was changed to a duet, in which the two never went to the same tune, and in which there was a continual strife, as to who should *not* sing *second*. He of the pedigree beyond the flood, first turned Turk,—which, by the way, was an easy turning, as he had never been much of a Christian.

His lady, however, being also a little apt in the Mahommedan ritual, was

not slow in following his example ; and she had not seen the horns of a second moon at Castlecove, ere she became irrecoverably disgusted with that mansion which had stood so fair in words, and with that domain which had spread so amply and been so promising upon paper. The castle, by the way, had been in a great part built, as many other castles are, in the air ; and the domain which looked so fair and fascinating to the eye, had been purchased at the sale of an estate agent's old plans, for the sum of eighteen pence. Its history is, indeed, a little singular ; for, after having served Lord Balimahone in the important office of gaining him a loss, it did yeoman's service to the presumptive

sovereign of an ideal State, not upon the peninsular part of the American continent. The cazique of Poyais bought it through a cunning agent, for the sum of ninepence ; and exhibiting it as an accurate map of his caziquate, from a trigonometrical survey, conducted by his corps of engineers, under the superintendance of the marshals and generals of his army, made use of it for imposing upon the dotard and dissatisfied people of his own country, so as to rid them at once of their money and their lives, by a process the most expeditious.

When Lady Balimahone arrived at the mansion, which, in the description, had been all elegance, she found a clumsy and ruined tenement, pervious

to the wind and rain in every quarter, with no other advantage than that of being impregnable to every attack, save those of hunger and misery. On one side roared the ocean, and on the other an unprofitable bog stretched to the verge of the horizon, and God knows how far beyond. The cold damp of these brought on such an ague of her temper, that, after many unsuccessful calls to order, his Lordship rose ; a *division* of the *House* was put and carried,—the Peer taking the inside, and “ darling dove,” as she had been called, whilst the first moon was yet hornless as a sucking calf, being constrained to take the outside ; and to return, in short, to her astonished mamma.

On their journey to Spa, the Baron

and Baroness were as happy as love could make them ; but soon after his arrival, his titles were questioned, and found to be only *put on* ; his chateau was a ruin ; and his fortune—a something unknown. Madame was enraged at all these discoveries—especially at the last one ; but after hysterics, tears and reproaches, she agreed to live abroad in a very private manner. The *soi-disant* Baron got all he wanted, a house to shelter, and a table to pamper him ; and, in return for these, he bore with Dutch patience the curtain lectures of the night, and the upbraidings of the day. When, however, the storm raged to a very high degree, he lighted his pipe, and puffed his sorrow aloft in a volume of smoke.

Thus were two of the Graces sped :
Susan, the third, remained a spin-
ster ; and so there is an end of their
chapter.

CHAP. III.

“ Good unexpected, evil unforeseen,
Appear by turns, as fortune shifts the scene.”

THE fall from the hospitable Lady Flora of Glenmore, the darling of a fond and honourable father, the hope of a brave clan, and the delight of all around, to the insulted governess of chance nobility, was great indeed ; nor was the appointment of *companion* to a General's widow any very great promotion in itself ; but that was far sweeter in reality than in name ; and the succession of circumstances had grown out of each other. The last

one, too, had imparted much pleasure, and was to lead on to wealth ; and could it have opened the chambers of the grave, and bid those who lay cold and silent within come forth to the light and the enjoyment of life, it would have been pleasure without alloy. As it was, it gilded all that remained, and threw a soft though transparent shadow over that which was gone. The good lady had uniformly acknowledged her young friend as her relation, and caused her to be respected as such ; and her attachment to her became every day stronger and stronger. With that loyal affection, common to every one in whose breast are the true feelings of a Highlander, Mrs. Maclachlan even looked up to

Flora as the true and only representative of Glenmore ; and what was more pleasant than all this, she loved, and had good reason to love Flora, for her own sake. The noble qualities and increasing deserts of the adopted daughter, those fascinations of the well-cultivated mind, and the well-regulated heart, of which no parade had been made at the outset, but which had been allowed to be drawn out by circumstance and accident, won the whole heart of the adopting mother. With a mother's anxiety and a mother's scrutiny, she had watched the conduct of Flora, and found new indications of worth constantly coming into view. The most delightful gentleness, the most complete forgivingness, the most

thing done, but in the manner of doing it : love, as it increases, gives a greater depth of attention ; money purchases only an increase of breadth.

Flora would allow no one to nurse or sit up with her patroness but herself ; and she did not leave the house for one moment till her health was again restored. This, though unnoticed, was not unobserved by the good lady ; for no sooner had she recovered, than she sent for her solicitor, in order to add a codicil to her will. On the day upon which this deed was executed, she was in high spirits ; and after dinner, she asked Flora to accompany her to her *boudoir*, as she had something for her private ear. Flora, though conscious of innocence, co-

loured at this, as she dreaded that some malignant had again been making an anonymous inroad upon their peace; but the air and manner of Mrs. Maclachlan convinced her that whatever might be this secret communication, it could not be reproof.

When they had reached the apartment, Mrs. Maclachlan took Flora by the hand—"My child," said she, "for you are *my* child now," (mingled tears of sorrow and joy moistened the eyes of Flora), "from this day forward, you must not despond; consider not your situation here as one of dependence. You have been to me more than a daughter, and I should be unworthy of my country and my name, were I not to fulfil to you the

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little of a mother's duty that is in my power. Already you are respected in the house, and looked up to as my relation : from this day forth, consider yourself as my heir. Although I know well that you would be the Cordelia of the piece, and although there be no Regan or Goneril, to be ungrateful to me, or unkind to you, I shall not play Lear, by putting you into possession now ; but you may look forward to wealth, when you have closed these old eyes, and God knows how soon that may be."

Flora had no power of utterance ; she hid her head, and burst into a fit of agony. When she had recovered her powers of attention, Mrs. Maclachlan proceeded :—

“ From correspondence which I have had with your kinsman, Castlecreaghy, unknown to you, (you see I can have my secrets, as well as you have yours ; and he can be our common confidant, without betraying the one of us to the other),—from that correspondence, and from a calculation now before me, I estimate, that in five years your father’s debts will be paid off, with the exception of some items, on which, it is but too evident that the generosity of your father has been imposed upon ; and these we mean to contest, and, if possible, set aside. In the mean time, your own pocket allowance shall be four hundred a-year. And now, my dear child, as you can have nothing to wish for, either for yourself or those

whom God has spared to you, just let me beg of you to dry your unavailing tears, banish sorrow for which there is no hope, and throw not away those powers of pleasing and of being pleased, with which heaven has endowed you. Your sighs cannot burst open the tomb, and the tears of sympathy, which bedew the living, and make society look so fresh and so comfortable, are wholly inefficient when poured upon the dust, and cherish not a single germ in the dull earth of the charnel house. You cannot recal those dear ones whom you have lost ; and, therefore, it is both your duty and your interest to comfort and to be comforted with those that remain. So let me entreat you to bear up against melan-

choly, and chase all gloomy reflections from your mind ; above all, let me entreat, if you mean to reveal the real state of your fortune to any one ; and should the hand of time pluck from your bosom the thorn which now lacerates it, and a change of feeling induce you to enter that state, to which you are so well calculated for doing honour—let the man of your election take you on account of your own worth, and afterwards you will have it in your power to reward his affection by the rude domains of your ancestors, freed from every incumbrance, together with such memorials as may be left you by the poor General's widow."

The speaker and the hearer were both much agitated during this speech :

the former, because the latter stood not to her by blood in the same relation into which she had adopted her by friendship, and because her mention of the grave had put her in mind, that that too was the dwelling place of him who had received and merited the whole of her affection and tenderness. But the hand of time and the practice of humanity had smoothed for Mrs. Maclachlan all the rough points of the world, and her mind had that even and serene tenor which gives a promise, and is a foretaste of celestial bliss. We know not, indeed, that there is, in all the blushing of life's morning, or all the beaming of its noon, any thing half so delightful as the stilly calmness of its evening close, when the streaks

of heavenly hope are thrown across it, all glorious and glowing as the tints which curtain the couch of the sun. Mrs. Maclachlan felt the full force of those hopes, and, feeling them, she was tranquil herself, and infused tranquillity into others.

Not so with Flora ; though she had had as much preparation, and more experience than many that are old, she was still young, and the passions of youth, though pure, were still warm in her bosom. Those feelings kept her, for a long time, mute ; and, when she found utterance, it was to implore her benefactress to look out for an object more worthy of her bounty. She begged of her, again and again, to destroy the deed ; assured her, that any

little attention on her part was more than overpaid by the pleasure of having done it ; and suggested that her benefactress might have or find some relative, to whom her fortune would be more a right, and upon whom it would be better bestowed. At all events, she hoped that the issue which would determine that would be a very distant one, and so there would be a time yet far in the future, which would be early enough for thinking upon it. With respect to the urgent claims upon Glenmore, she declared that she would far rather at once pay them all, than have the name of her father coupled with any thing that might have even the remotest shadow of resemblance to dishonour. As to marriage (her lips

faultered and her voice sunk to a whisper as she spoke,) she declared that she could never now love any man living, and she would never profane the hymeneal altar, by offering upon it a hand which was not accompanied by her whole heart. The vow which she had already vowed, although attended by no human witness, and sealed by no priestly rites, had nevertheless gone forth from her lips. It was a vow of the heart in the sight of Heaven, never to be recalled, and never to be broken ; and, as he who had received it was in the tomb, it was fitting that it should dwell with him there.

Mrs. Maclachlan pressed her no further upon that point, or indeed upon any other ; but at the same time as-

sured her that no relative of her own had cause to complain ; and that when her head was laid in the dust, she could not anticipate that there would be found any one who would blame her settlement, or blacken her memory.

Upon their return to the drawing-room, Mrs. Maclachlan shewed Flora the letter, which contained sundry pieces of good news respecting the prosperity of the clan generally, and that of the branches of it in particular. Among these were the return of two clansmen, the one from the East Indies, and the other from the West. They had both been equipped at Glenmore's expense, and sent over through his interest, and though this good deed, on

his part, was unknown to Flora, it was not unremembered by them. Along with this general letter there had come a particular one for Flora, informing her that young Charles Edward was a fine thriving child, and had hoisted the tartan worn by him whose name he bore.

Taking the sum of all these circumstances of comfort, a worldling might have been raised to his third heaven, by half the amount ; and there are few whom they would not have elevated to the very cope-stone of joy. It was, indeed, as the world says, “ a white letter day,” and on such a day, there are few who would not in their souls have been altogether glad ; but the lost father, the lost lover, and the lost friend, were

ever uppermost in the breast of Flora, and their presence cast a shade of melancholy, varying in depth, but constant in duration, over features which otherwise would have been lit up with dimples, smiles, and all the witching fascinations of love. Still she seemed as cheerful as she could, lest her conduct should disturb the happiness of, or savour of ingratitude to, that friend who had been so gratuitously and so extensively kind ; and who retired to rest that night with a heart light and contented as prospering goodness ever merits and ever enjoys.

Trials are not incessant. They are also the lot of every one alike ; where they are great, the end for which they are imposed is great ; and those who are

duly impressed with this incontrovertible truth, will never fail in being armed with courage to bear them, and ability to get through them.

In a day or two after this, a very curious letter came from the Highlands. It was from Flora's kinsman, and the object of it was to inquire, whether in the newspapers or elsewhere, she had heard or read any thing of Lord Gerald, of whom Castlecreaghy had not yet lost sight. As little had he abandoned his projected trip to the continent, should his Lordship so far recover his strength and tone, as to be a fit adversary for the Highlander.

That the Highlander's resentment should return to him, when he set his foot upon his native mountains, was

nothing curious ; but there was something curious in the cause of it, which was a dream, that had been dreamed by old Rory the seer ; and a curse which the said Rory had in consequence denounced. The dream brought the lost Isabella to the eyes of the old man in deep mourning, and with a written paper in her hand ; at the same time, an outlandish man, in a cloak, stabbed her thrice, and muttered these words, “ By Lord Gerald’s orders.”

It was known in the Highlands that Lord Gerald had deserted her, and that she had retired to a convent ; though her sufferings in London, where she had been, or under what circumstances she had been left, had never

been divulged. But upon these grounds, upon the breach of promise, and upon the fact of Glenmore's premature end, the mountaineer conceived his curse, the words of which, although they were regarded, from the peculiarity of his character and the prejudices of his clan, as sacred words, approached too nearly to the two extremes of blasphemy and nonsense, for being written down for general perusal.

Flora read the words with some regret; but she answered to them mildly and morally. She assured her kinsman that the only tidings of his Lordship that had come to her ear were, that he was still in very bad health,—enough so to lay asleep every ferocious feeling even towards him. She hinted to him,

that the conscience of the guilty man would, in itself, be a greater punishment to him than any which human hands could inflict; and that, if revenge was the object of her kinsman, he would be but defeating his own purpose by any interference with the workings of an agonizing remorse, and the gnawings of that worm which sleeps not in life and which dies not at death.

As soon as Mrs. Maclachlan's health was completely restored, she thought it would be right that her adopted daughter should see more company, as well to ween her from her desponding thoughts, as to prepare her for acting for herself, when that casualty of life, which must, in the course of nature, have been near, should deprive

her of the care and counsels of her adopting friend. For this purpose, she advised her to lay aside the sable garb, which had been worn far longer than the most punctilious etiquette required, and which had no necessary connexion with real sorrow; and, if she would have some constant remembrancer of those whom she had lost, to wear around her neck a miniature of her father, which had been painted from the life, with one on the reverse, of her lover, which she had herself painted from memory, and which was to the full as faithful. Even to this charge Flora might have taken exceptions, had it not been that her kind friend told her that there was an

affectation in her persisting to wear what Hamlet terms—

“ —— idle mockery of woe.”

Still, however, she yielded with reluctance ; and there were days, sacred to memory, upon which she still claimed the dark garments as her due.

Habited in a costume, which was more in accordance with her youth and beauty, and which, even little as she heeded it, gave more ample scope to that chasteness of taste which she possessed, she gained very great and very general admiration ; and suitors, though they were not aware that she possessed any thing, were as numerous, but they were not more successful than those

who had previously put in their claims. Flora was courteous to all, but she would be wooed of none; and her manners, and the persons with whom she associated, prevented every approach to what could be termed even innocent levity.

CHAP. IV.

“ And nothing left her but to die.”

THE butterfly and the bee are both attracted by the gayest flowers, though the one appears to be attracted merely by the colours, and the other by the more substantial matter of the honey. It is much the same with the insect elegant and the man of taste ; they both throng around the flowers of beauty,—the one attracted by the mere glitter of appearance, and the other won by the more sure, but less externally apparent charms of the mind. Flora’s appearance at once peopled the air

around her with butterflies, and the charms of her conduct and conversation were not long in procuring for her the admiration of those from whom admiration, had she desired it at all, would have been the most desirable. To all these attentions, she, however, showed the most perfect indifference. Nor did she show indifference to casual attentions only, but also to those of a more peculiar and specific character—to offers, which in point of worth, fortune, and estimation in society, might have been accounted very favourable. She refused them all, but as there was in her refusals neither pride nor caprice, neither assumed dignity of rank nor waywardness of temper, she did that which is perhaps the hardest task

imposed upon beauty—she rejected without giving offence. It was plain that she did not dismiss one in order that she might encourage another who was more elevated in rank, in fortune, or, which is, perhaps, the most galling to a rival, in personal qualifications. As little did she conduct herself like the practised flirt, who repays upon the innocent and unsuspecting part of the male sex, the injury which the more practised perform toward the females. She did not make advances for the purpose of drawing a young man's attention from a rival beauty, and then, when she had so drawn it, turn her back upon him, and exult in the double injury by such means occasioned. Nay, she did not refuse offers

on account of ambition, disparity of age, or any other motive of a selfish kind ; but she was deaf to every conjugal proposal, because she had given her heart to one, whose memory she held too dear for giving her hand to another. What gave additional merit to this conduct was, that her discretion and her modesty went hand in hand ; and whilst the chasteness of her manners forbade her to trifle with her admirers, her discretion induced her never to expose their want of success. Another advantage which she possessed, was that gravity of habit which her misfortunes had given her, and which prevented her from forming any of those giddy and romantic female intimacies, which are but too frequently

injurious both to the steadiness and success of young women.

Since her Isabella was lost to her and the world, she had no confidant, and no bosom friend, save her dear Emily and her esteemed patroness; and even to these she never hinted at the subject which she had most deeply at heart,—her fondness for the memory of him, who had been her first and only love. Her affection for Strathan-tin had been, indeed, one of those gentle passions, which spring up like field flowers, whereof none can trace the planting, or reckon the progress; an accidental thing, as it were, which had crept on by degrees, and which had exhibited the expanding of its bud, its leaves and its petals, without

care and without apparent cultivation, —a sweet thing of the wilds of nature, which had displayed its hues, and wafted its fragrance,

“ By fountain, shaw, or green.”

The two had strayed together in their childhood, had thatched their little hut with wild thyme from the mountain, and planted their little garden with daisies and primroses from the glen; their affection was that of a brother and sister, which gradually ripened and had glided into the heart as something more warm, but without intention, and, indeed, without consciousness, on their part. They had been attached to each other they knew [not how; but somehow or other it seemed as if

from the outset they had between them only one heart ; for their separation rendered the happiness of each incomplete ; and, long before any thing that could have been called love visited their bosoms, the absence of the one always gave pain to the other. They both looked up to Glenmore, and honoured him as a father, and, when more advanced years began to whisper to them that they too were human beings, and would have, ere long, to act a part for themselves, the star of their direction, and the beacon light of their hope, was the expectation of being united by indissoluble bonds,—bonds which would unite two ancient and respectable families into one, and make them the pride and protection of their mountain

world—of that home which was all the world to them.

It was not to be supposed that Flora would relinquish the memory of a love which had been so perfect in its beginning, and so pure and incessant in its course; and if she would question the fact of her lover's untimely end, and endeavour to argue him out of his grave—that was no matter with which to find fault.

Amongst the gay and giddy ones, who paid their ready visits and volunteered their attentions in May Fair, was Sir Lionel Languid,—a being, who, having survived youth, was still alive to all its vanities; and who, having once been a superlative ex-

quisite, had glided imperceptibly into a non-admiration of every thing, save the phantom of Fashion, with which he still kept on terms. For all other subjects he felt, or at least expressed, the most perfect indifference, imagining, no doubt, that that was a sure indication of his superior breeding and knowledge of the world.

With Sir Lionel, matrimony was either wholly out of the question, or had never been in it; and in his visits at the General's widow's, he certainly had no view either to the hand or the heart of her adopted daughter; but to attend her parties, had become quite the fashion, or, as he himself said, "there was nothing but tartan would

go down ;” and so he resolved to be at least a follower in the ray of that colour.

Sir Lionel, though no beau, was nevertheless a bit of a gossip, and among females of a certain age, this quality was every bit as much prized. Of those who fell under the aspersions of his semi-feminine tongue, the Tynedale family were not the least frequently mentioned.

He spoke of the Duchess-dowager as having undergone a strange metamorphosis, when she put on her title, and also of the metamorphosis which had taken place in her establishment.

“ We all remember,” said he, “ the day when her Grace’s house was a perfect club room ; when there was moving

in at the one door, and out at the other, without intermission ; when the Sunday was no Sabbath day, unless in as far as the homilies of scandal outdid, in the energy with which they were delivered, and the ardour with which they were listened to, the homilies of any rector within ten miles of Hyde Park. It was, indeed, a delightful place for those whose presence was too much wanted at home, and many a bailiff has beat half the bushes at the west end, for a hapless gay one, who was all the time very snugly lodged in the holly-bush of her Grace's society. It was extremely convenient, too, for officers who had been relieved from guard, and who found but cold commons at their own apartments. I

always argued, that bad matches to the Graces, would be the result of their mother's manœuvring. Manœuvring or not, indeed, I do not know who make good ones ; and as to the marriage of the Baroness, why it was downright madness. All foreign alliances are bad ; at least, great or small, they generally have this in them, that the British party, whether a high contracting party, or a low contracting party, has to pay for all."

Such was a pretty fair specimen of Sir Lionel's power of entertaining ; what success it may have upon the reader, we know not ; but we can assure the said reader, that, to use the language of the east end of the town,

in speaking of the west, we “quote it above average.”

None of the company at May Fair seemed, however, to be so deeply impressed with the importance of this matter, as was the Baronet himself; and he was not a little mortified to find that the only movement which his observations excited in the company, was one in the muscles of the lower jaw, by no means the most flattering to an orator. Flora observed this; and as the severer part of the duty of entertaining the guests had devolved upon her, she endeavoured to say something or other which might procure, if not for the Baronet, at least for the topic which he had started, a

momentary attention, under which he might effect some decent sort of retreat.

“ Foreign alliances,” said she, addressing herself to him, “ have two great drawbacks : the first is, a want of sufficient knowledge of the party, and the second is, the probability of being expatriated for the whole, or the greater part of the remainder of life. By this, love of country must suffer very severely ; and, for my own part, to separate me from my native mountains, without the hope of returning thither, would be the severest privation to which I could be exposed. Happy as I ought to find myself, I am perfectly home-sick ; and though London be so great and so gay, it cannot

rob me of the home of my fathers, and the haunts of my youth, or of more than the hundredth part of my attention."

"*C'est la maladie du pays,*" remarked the Baronet ; " the Swiss have exactly the same ; and it is remarkable that folks like their country all the better, the less it is worth. As for myself, I am a cosmopolite. I swear allegiance to no one kingdom, and indeed to no one quarter of the world ; nay, when the gas-men shall have once made a balloon light enough, strong enough, and well enough victualled for the journey, I have not the smallest objection to be the first voyager to the moon, the nearest place, by the bye, where I could feel a longing

for home; for upon whatever point of this earth I should be placed, provided there were something to eat and drink, something to wear, something to say, and some pretty fair ones to look at, I should not consider myself very much of a stranger."

"Yes, Sir Lionel," said Flora, "it may be all very well for a native of a place like London, where an individual, of whatever rank, is so completely buried in the crowd of similar individuals—to care little about the place of his birth. He needs not remember it, because it will not remember him; but in the retirements of the north, the case is far different, for there even you and I would be somebody."

"Very true, madam," said the Ba-

ronet ; “ with your beauty and my wit we might make a very tolerable epitome of every body,—that is, of every body of whom it could be said that they were somebody. And yet, after all, London or Paris is the place for my head-quarters, because there every body is nobody, and nobody every body. Vienna might pass, but then it is somewhat annoying to hear a lady speak words, each of which are as clumsy and as long as a flail ; the place is cold, too, and the wine is like caudle. Folks of taste hie them to Italy ; but then there are the stilettoes of Naples, the ‘ *mal aria*’ at Rome, and the Lord knows what in Lombardy.”

Nothing can prove more strongly the effect which the conversation of

an intelligent female has upon the conversation of those with whom she associates, than this discourse between Sir Lionel and the Heiress of Glenmore. By nature, and by habit, he was a trifler, and it is doubtful whether, during six months preceding, his conversation had displayed half so near an approximation to original thinking, as it did during this brief space. This did not pass unnoticed by the company; and the whisper, that Sir Lionel Languish was becoming a very Plato in philosophy, produced an action of their muscles very different from that which had followed his dissertation on the Tynedale family. Seeing this, he thought the oppor-

tunity a favourable one for regaining the ground and credit he had lost upon that very subject.

“The demise of the Duke of Quincey,” said he, “was a sledge-hammer blow to the ambition of the Duchess ; who wanted to make a match against time with one of her Graces and his Grace ; but time beat them, and *her* Grace was so fatigued of the strife, that she has every chance of retaining her present appellation to the end of life’s chapter, unless some parson wishes to make her the stepping stone to a benefice ; or some speculator from the sister kingdom, wishes, as himself would say, ‘to be united with her in a separation.’” The wrong convulsion

came upon the jaws again, and this ended the chapter of Grace and matrimony.

The round of pleasure,—the balls,—the musical parties,—the twice-a-week's attendance at the Opera,—and all the other movements and machinery requisite for the bringing out of a young lady with proper effect, proved very fatiguing to Mrs. Maclachlan; and though she had not felt a mother's pains in the natural birth of her whom she now called her daughter, she suffered a longer and a more laborious trial in that second birth through which she became a fashionable. After so much labour, a little rest became necessary, both to the adopting and the adopted, and so they resolved to

tie up the knocker, (which had suffered not a little,) for the space of three days. The first and second of those days were days of unbroken tranquillity,—days which, in consequence of the storm whereunto their calm had succeeded, were peculiarly refreshing and delightful. Like all the sunny glades of life, however, they were brief, and the third day brought occurrences which occupied their attention with no small degree both of intensity and of pain.

The first was a mere rumour; but circumstanced as Flora was, it seemed to her a rumour of war. A morning paper contained these words: “ It will be gratifying to men of letters, to learn that Lord Gerald de Brooke, after a long absence, in which his health has

suffered severely from his assiduity in his literary pursuits, has so far recovered, as to give great hopes of his speedy return to England.”

The moment that this statement met the eye of Flora, it produced a renewal of a fear, lest the intelligence should bring the hostility of her kinsmen for the false Lord to a fatal issue. This fear was indeed groundless ; but Flora was ignorant of the shifts and deceits of which the press is made the vehicle. She was not aware that this was nothing more than a trick of Lord Gerald himself, or of those who had made a profit at his hands, to keep him still in the eye of the world ; and that it was at the same time, a blind, to turn the attention from his present residence,

and prevent the mortification which might ensue, if the real state of his health, bodily and mental, should get abroad. His was not a state of incoherent madness, with lucid intervals, but a lowness of spirit, brought on by debility; a constant alarm, occasioned by the gnawings of conscience; a dissatisfaction, arising from perpetual irritation; and the dejection of one who felt that he merited, and who actually possessed, no friends—who was haunted by a spy, in the form of a relation, and disturbed by disaffected mercenaries whom his arrogance had disgusted. False, however, although this information was, it brought up to town the all-remembering Highlander, who, but for the dread which she had of future

mischief, would have been a welcome visitor to his fair cousin.

The second circumstance was of a more melancholy description. A large letter was delivered by the postman. It was written upon French paper ; its superscription was not in the handwriting of Isabella ; its seal was black ; and its envelope had a deep border of the same. Flora broke the seal with a throbbing heart and a trembling hand, for the external signs had revealed to her the internal communication. Poor Isabella was no more ! That heart, which, in the unsuspecting gaiety of youth, had been allured by dreams of splendour and pictures of happiness never to be realized—to leave the paths of innocence and virtue,—that heart,

which once so captivated, and which was yet perfect in all its tenderness, had been cast away as a worthless thing by the seducer—had been broken; and the letter was one from the superior of the convent, announcing the melancholy fact, and adding the only consolation that it could add, that the young nun had expired in the faithful and fervent exercise of her religion.

The agony which such a communication produced upon Flora may be conceived, but cannot be described; and the deep effect which it had upon her, was rendered the more painful, inasmuch as having concealed it hitherto, she could not mention to her kind patroness the circumstances of the melancholy event. All that she could

say was, that the death of a dear and near relative had severely afflicted her, and would render it necessary that she should again withdraw from gay society, and put on those robes which were more in accordance with her feelings.

CHAP. V.

“ The holy book can lay the sheeted ghost
That comes o’ the grave ; but there are haunting things
No holy book can conjure.”

OLD PLAY.

CASTLECREAGHY called upon his fair kinswoman upon the day following that which had brought her the melancholy news, and while her grief was yet unblunted in its edge by any of those circumstances which nature, if the heart of the mourner break not down under the first stroke, always contrives to interpose. As he entered the apartment of the lovely mourner,

he found her dark in her attire, and yet darker in her grief. . He stood aghast; anxious to know, and yet fearful to ask.

“ She, for whom our hearts have so often bled, is no more !” said Flora ; “ she has fallen in a strange land, where there were none but aliens to perform the last sad duties of affection,—to smooth the pillow, and find its softest side for the aching head,—to chafe the throbbing temple,—to wipe the cold and clammy brow,—to moisten the parching lip,—to catch the dying breath, and to close the curtains of those eyes which death’s stern hand had extinguished to all perception under the sun. Would that I had then been near her ! Why gave she not to me her dy-

ing hand? and why did not I receive her last instruction?"

The Highlander was a man of short sentences, except upon questions of pedigree, and so all that he replied was, "God's will be done! and may she have been prepared!"

Flora, however, gave vent to a more permanent and bitter expression of anguish. This was the more intense in the presence of her kinsman, in consequence of his being the only ear into which the melancholy tale could be poured; for, having concealed the progress of the sad drama from Mrs. Mac-lachlan, she could not well lacerate her feelings with the closing scene; and little Mary was now in the land of the north, to which she had gone, with

little Charles Edward. To her cousin, therefore, Flora unbosomed the whole of her grief. He had no tear, no sigh, no compliment, and no condolence ; but his heart seemed frozen up in a long silence of sorrow. The fact was, that his sorrow was more for the loss and stain of his clan, than for the positive departure of Isabella from this world. He considered her as the cause of most of the ills which had befallen the clan,—of the premature death of the brave and generous chief,—of the removal of Flora from the castle, and of the breaking up of the style, state, and hospitality of Glenmore, which had known no such interruption since time began to take jottings of the con-

duct of mankind. True, Isabella when a child, had been a favourite with Castlecreaghy,—true, she had climbed his knees, pulled his hair, and done a number of those little teasing arts by which girls are endeared ; but it was also true, that she had, in after life, acted a part which he was slow in forgiving. Still, however, the aversion, (which he could not help feeling, though he took care not to express it,) to the fate of Isabella, took not more the shape of pity towards her, than of revenge towards her spoiler. While he heard from Flora the mournful news, the whole ruin and spoliation which the perfidy of Lord Gerald had perpetrated, came full upon him, and with

that came a fresh purpose of revenge, more stern, because more sweet than ever.

The more effectually to disguise this his intention from her who had previously won him from his purpose, he joined her in her grief; and he did that part of it with perfect sincerity; he endeavoured to comfort her by all the sources of hope which he could open.

Flora's chief consolation, however, lay in the opportunity which his presence afforded her, of giving vent to her grief; and the strong expression of that, upon the present occasion, formed a remarkable contrast to the calm and dignified sorrow, with which she had looked upon the bier of her

father, and heard the melancholy tidings of her lover's death. This, though to superficial thinkers it might appear to be out of nature, was in accordance with her best-toned impulse. When those bitter privations came upon Flora, they came upon her in a mass, and she herself was the sufferer. Whereas, in the present case, she was at ease and in safety herself, and thus she could look upon the melancholy case of her kinswoman, with the eye of a spectator ; and thus see its whole extent, and appreciate the whole of its bitterness. It is with the being whom misery drives, as it is with the boat upon the river, or the bark before the gale ; that one knows not the velocity of the current, nor the force of the wind,

which are discoverable only by those upon firm ground ; and thus it proved with Flora ; for though she had been all firmness and resignation, when the cup of sorrow had been presented to her own lips, she felt deeply, and expressed that feeling strongly, now that the bitter dregs of that cup had been drained by another.

Though Castlecreaghy laid claim to no great skill in the science of consolation, he by accident fed the sorrow of his fair kinswoman with that which was the best, and, perhaps, the only medicine. He drew her attention from the sadness of the present time, and the bitterness of that which had immediately passed, to those days of

youthful gaiety, and unsullied and unsuspecting innocence, which lay more remote ; and by reflecting upon these, Flora was, in part, diverted from the melancholy fate of Isabella, and the errors and sufferings by which that fate had been brought on. In this manner may agony be lulled for a while, and thus may the moments of affliction be cheated of part of their weight ; but when night, silence, and solitude come round ; when the taper shows itself an emblem of the funeral torch ; when unsubstantial shadows pass across the imagination ; when the pillow has no soft side that can afford mental repose, and when change of position brings on but a change of pain,—

then it is that the book of life seems blank to us, from the erasure of the names of those once dear.

After a variety of consultations, it was resolved that the death of Isabella should be made public, in order that those who were interested, might see where and how she had closed her career; that envy might have one prey the less, and that the pity of her kindred and clan might mark the last page of her history; but still more, that he by whom her ruin had been perpetrated, might read the record of his own iniquity,—might see that memorial added to many others, all tending to render his name a shame to virtue, and the foulest stain to an illustrious lineage,—that he might not even have the uncertainty of

what had been her fate, but that he might meet the avenging angel in his own bosom, in the nakedness of guilt, and with all retreat cut off by despair.

When this was carried into effect, and when the relations of the family had received written communications to the same effect, Castlecreaghy took his leave of Flora, but without communicating to her the slightest hint of the resolution which he had formed ; after having only allowed so much time to elapse as that the news of Isabella's death might reach the place of his destination, before he set out for Aix-la-Chapelle, in order to call the treacherous Lord to account for his perfidy.

Privations, like joys, seldom come singly. This remark is so obvious, that

if we have not made it a dozen of times in the course of this narrative, it has not been for the want of a dozen occasions to which it would have been applicable. The departure of Castlecreagh, which had followed the loss of Isabella, was in its turn followed by the departure of one, who, under the existing circumstances, could not be very well spared. With the exception of Mrs. Maclachlan, (and she, though the most kind and bountiful lady in the world, was not a companion for the whole heart of one so young as Flora,) there was not now in the ten thousand streets and squares of London, a single other being, to whom she could turn with the fondness of affection, or in whom she could con-

fide with a reciprocity of good faith. Lady Fitz Arthur, notwithstanding the dash of levity in her character, was the companion the most to Flora's mind ; but the door had barely closed upon Castlecreaghy, when it again opened to let in the intelligence, that she was in the very act of departing for France—in which country her lord had resolved to spend a year: not upon the usual ground of allowing the wounds in his rental to be a little cicatrized, but that his country mansion, his health and his habits might all be a little improved by the result of travel.

Under these circumstances, the plan was a prudent one, for against all the maladies of such persons, locomotion, if taken in time, and used temperately, is the very

best means of resistance; and though the instances are not many, we could mention some, who, after a year or two spent in this manner, have returned to be ornaments to that country, of which, previous to their departure, they were either the annoyance or the disgrace.

Voluntary change of place, with those who have no business or professional call, is generally an attempt to escape from misery of some kind or other. If the misery be wholly from without; if the heart maintain its purity and the mind its spring, then the cure is certain; but if, as is too frequently the case, the evil be in these, there is no flying from it: and those who go abroad with an intention of escaping from their own dissipated habits, ge-

nerally bring back with them all that they carried abroad, together with a very considerable addition of foreign production. Most of our nobility and gentry who quit home for the continent, delay the measure till it be too late, and, instead of deriving any advantage from their residence there, only become more dissipated and more wretched. Lord Fitz Arthur's migration was taken in time, and therefore it was not followed by any of these consequences. While he resided abroad, his establishment and the style of his living were every way worthy the dignity of a British nobleman; and when he judged that the course had been for a sufficient length of time persisted in, he was welcomed

to his native land, by a set of friends more elevated in rank and in character than the giddy young men with whom he had previously associated. His main object in going abroad, indeed, was to get himself out of the society of foolish companions, into which he had, in the heedlessness of youth, been drawn ; and to get his name taken out of the lists of sundry clubs, which, though he had once considered them as an honour, he now regarded with very different feelings.

In this work of reformation he was very efficiently assisted by Lady Fitz Arthur, who had been the first to get rid of her giddiness, and who subsequently continued to make that of her ord disagreeable to him, at the same

time that she made *herself* more agreeable than ever.

The same messenger who brought the intelligence of Lady Fitz Arthur's intended departure, brought a pleading, and of a less unwelcome sort,—a wish, though only a half expressed one, that Flora would accompany her ladyship to France.

She did not state this directly, but she drew a glowing picture of the pleasure that would result from twelve months spent in that country, by two who were united in so long and so close a friendship; and the possibility was hinted at of Mrs. Maclachlan's consenting to a scheme, which would so much gratify Lady Fitz Arthur. The idea of France, was, however, coupled in

Flora's mind with the idea of her lost cousin, and so her going there, even in the society of her Emma, would, though it had been no breach of duty to Mrs. Maclachlan, have been exceedingly painful to herself.

It was her duty, however, and not the pain, which prompted her resolution, and as that was a matter which could be spoken of, while this suited better with being veiled in obscurity, it was the one upon which Flora took her stand, or rather the one upon which she grounded her excuse. Before departure, however, she passed an evening with her friend ; and as the circumstances under which that friend was going abroad, were, upon the whole, cheering, she bade her

adieu with more lightness of heart than she had felt for some days previous ; and the friendship and society of the good widow tended to promote the healing of her spirit.

But though she was tranquillized, she was not at all comforted, and, both from desire and from decorum, she shunned all public places, and as much as possible even all mingling 'in the select society which visited May Fair. Her benefactress, indeed, obliged her to resume her morning rides, lest too close confinement, together with the lingering of her internal grief, should injure her health. This injunction was a law to her, but as that law did not prescribe the direction,—she shunned the publicity of the parks. For

several days she felt a strong inclination to call upon the poor woman at whose house Isabella had lodged ; and this inclination, of which she could not trace the origin, grew so much upon her, as to become at last irresistible. She accordingly went, and though there was no cause for her former caution, habit made her steal along with her wonted wariness, and leave the domestic posted at his old station.

“ La, ma’am,” said the woman, as Flora entered, “ there is a monstrous mistification about that good lady, as lodged in them apartments. I am sure she was as sweet as an angel, God rest her soul when her time comes ! and keep her till then.”

“ It is come already,” said Flora

with a sigh; "she has paid the debt of nature."

"That I am sure of, ma'am," said the woman; "she never would let no debts be owing as long as she had something to sell; and when she had no more that nobody would give nothing for, then your ladyship came to do her a good turn, like the angel of retribution. She was a sweet soul, poor dear; and I wish her well wherever she be."

"Your good wishes will not now avail her," said Flora; "for she is now in heaven."

"Oh, ma'am, I hope not, not so soon," said the good woman, bursting into tears, to which Flora was obliged to allow some scope; and just

in proportion to their violence was the shortness of their duration, and then, with a very arch and knowing look, she addressed Florá in these words :—

“ Ma’am, I beg your pardon, ma’am, and I am sure I don’t wish to take no liberty, ma’am ; but there is a tall gentleman, as handsome as ever stept in a shoe, that knows something about somebody, ma’am.”

Flora coloured. “ If you allude to me,” said she, “ I can only say that you have both mistaken the object of your address, and the time and manner of making it.”

“ I means no harm in God’s world, ma’am ; indeed, indeed I assure you, none in the least,” said the woman

curtesying down to the ground ; “ but I do assure you, that a tall handsome gentleman did call, and did offer me money, if I would tell him the name and the address of the lady (that’s yourself, you know, ma’am) as used to come here daily to visit the sweet little baby that the great savage in the plaid took away to the mountains of Gilboar, as I thinks he called ’em ; but, says I, Sir, you are as wise on that subject as myself, says I ; for you know, ’ma’am, though I knew as you staid with my lady Maglaglan, but I did not know your name ; and thinks I, if I tell this man that the lady lives with my lady Maglaglan, my daughter will lose her place, and so I keeps my tongue.”

“ And pray, may I ask,” said Flora,

“ what this impertinent inquirer might be like ?”

“ Indeed, ma’am,” said the woman, “ he was no pertinent inquirer. He spoke as proper as ever a lord in the land ; and he would have paid me a goulden guinea for every word I told him, but I would not have offended my lady Maglaglan, and caused my daughter to lose her place, for all his persuasions.

“ May I ask what further conversation you had with him ?” said Flora, who began to be a little curious, merely on account of the incomprehensible style in which the good woman had continued to wrap up her communication.

“ He asked for the child,” said the woman.

“ And what reply did you give him ?” said Flora.

“ I said an outlandish man had taken him away.”

“ And what said he to that ?”

“ He said, where? and turned up his face as if he had been looking in the clouds for him ; and I said, ‘ it was no business of mine ; and he said something about the beautiful young lady, (meaning you, ma’am) and turning upon his heel, said wildly something about ‘ watched,’ and ‘ precipitate.’ And so thinks I, perhaps this gentleman is going to drown himself, or some such thing ; and I gets across

the court, and down Palace Yard, and stands a whole hour by the boat stairs, but nobody plumps into the water as I could see, so I conclude that nobody was drowned, and I came home and never heard no more about it.”

As the information which the good woman communicated bore some resemblance to a London fog, in being “the farther in, the darker,” Flora cut the conversation short, by giving the woman some trifling present, and escaping as fast as she could from a quarter of the town in which there seemed nothing but sorrow behind, and suspicion before. She could not imagine that an assassin or a miscreant, hired by Lord Gerald, to one or other of which tribes she never doubted that

this stranger belonged, could have any object in assailing her ; and as both Isabella and her unfortunate offspring were now beyond the reach of his vengeance, she had no fear upon their account ; but still the affair was mysterious, and, like all mysteries, it left her mind but ill at ease.

CHAP. VI.

When we have mixed, and mixed, and mixed the cup
Of deadliest poisons, and have sent it round
For other's drinking, oft a hand, unseen,
To our own lips returns it.

GANELLA.

THOUGH the information which Flora had received in Westminster struck no alarm into her pure and undaunted mind, it nevertheless imposed, if indeed the imposition was within the limits of possibility, the necessity of a greater degree of circumspection. She had nothing upon which she

dreaded scrutiny, and nothing whereupon she could fear reproof, but still she felt that she was subjected to an espionage, unknown in its origin, and incomprehensible in its agent; she therefore resolved to guard, by prudence and by retirement, against the annoyance of that which she knew not either how to meet or how to prevent. But let us leave her for a moment to her retirement, and turn our attention to the Highlander, who, firm to his purpose, had set out to the continent in quest of vengeance.

He who exhibits to mankind an appearance of *sang froid*, with death and danger before him, is at best but a counterfeit. The warrior, it is true, stands up to the cannon or the sabre

with firmness and dignity ; but there is a brand upon him if he act not thus ; and if he do so act, and escape to enjoy it, a laurel awaits him. His example is the strength of his companions ; his task is arduous, but it is a task which is imposed. He has a king to serve, and a country to protect. He has mandates to obey ; and friends and relatives to whom he is anxious to do honour. He has an untarnished name to leave behind him. Nor are his perils unmixed with hope ; for even in the battle field, and when death is coming in crowded ranks and in formidable shapes,

“ Hope springs eternal in the human breast.”

He may snatch a laurel from the cold

and appalling brows of death himself, and return with it in safety ; he may bring back an honourable scar, without material injury to his health ; he may triumph without cruelty ; he may conquer to save. Not so with the duellist : his is premeditated slaughter, or the setting of his life upon a die, and rashly abiding the chance. Slay, or be slain ; revenge, or fall in the attempt ; there is for him no triumph but the triumph of brutality, and no honour but that of revealing (which is, in all probability, very true) the little value at which he rates his own life. Yet these are the laws of honour ; and such being its laws, well might Falstaff ask, “ If it could set a leg, or take away the grief of a

wound?" Truly it cannot. It may break a leg, or it may inflict a wound ; but it " hath no skill in surgery : " it " is a mere 'scutcheon, and so ends my catechism." The code, in short, is framed by pride, and administered by presumption ; and perhaps the most accurate name for a duellist, is, that he is " a physical bully and a moral coward."

But we pursue not the argument here, and shall content ourselves with saying, that he who goes to seek a single combat in cold blood, belongs not to the children of humanity ; and that he who professes to do so, imposes upon himself as well as upon others.

Castlecreaghy was not altogether at

his ease upon this subject. No one that knew him could doubt his bravery ; and the warmth of his temper, when the honour or the interest of his clan was concerned, was just as fully demonstrated. But Castlecreaghy's bravery was " stuff o'the conscience," as well as the mere brute armour of your ordinary bully. He stood in as much fear of a stain arising from the rash deed of his own hand, as he did of a stain which was imposed through the villany of another. As he proceeded onward, therefore, his passions did not pull all the same way. His hatred of one who had betrayed and deserted innocence in so heartless a manner, goaded him on to vengeance ; but his reason condemned him at every step.

His clan and name were dear to him. Neither had borne the stain of blood, save in the battle field, legitimized by the command of king or of chieftain.

Had this moralizing mood come across Castlecreaghy while his foot was yet upon the fine land of Britain, we are not sure whether he had ever quitted that land upon such an errand; but he thought not of it till becalmed in the mid-sea. Now as bringing water over them is said to be a very excellent means of stopping the pugnacious propensities of dogs and of draymen, we see no reason why bringing men of *honour* slowly and quietly across the water, should not have a cooling and tranquillizing effect upon them. It

had this effect upon the Highlander. It allayed not his courage, indeed, for that had not much to do in the matter ; but it awakened his reason, and pointed out to him, that as even the death of Lord Gerald could neither recall Isabella from the grave, nor wipe the stain from her memory, to attempt it was a foolish thing, and to attempt against a man so enfeebled in mind and in body, as Lord Gerald was represented to be, might savour somewhat of cowardice.

But though the calm, which lasted two or three days, gave Castlecreaghy the complete command of his own temper, it did not give him the command of the ship ; and therefore, fight or not fight, he was obliged to land in

Belgium. Here again was another puzzle ; that Castlecreaghy had gone to Belgium, could not be concealed ; as little could it be concealed, that he had no business whatever there, except for the purpose of fighting Lord Gerald ; and if Castlecreaghy had taken a journey over the land, and a voyage across the sea, for the purpose of fighting a duel, and yet turned back without fighting it, when at the very threshold of his antagonist's door, Castlecreaghy would most certainly have been laughed at ; and though, morally speaking, he liked the duel ill, he would have liked the laughing much worse : therefore Castlecreaghy put his pistols and his powder-horn in his wallet, and marched off for Aix-la-Chapelle.

One thing, or rather one person, was wanting, to complete the arrangement: money, of course, would procure surgical aid, should surgical aid be necessary; but Castlecreaghy would not either have killed, or have been killed, with comfort, if seconded by any one else than a Highlander. Therefore, in the first town that he reached, he made inquiries after one or other of his countrymen. Nor was he unsuccessful; for almost the very first man that he met was not only a countryman but a cousin, though a cousin of how many removes is not said.

Castlecreaghy revealed his purpose to this cousin, with all the earnestness and all the gravity which a purpose of so much importance required; and he

was replied to by the words, "You are too late by a week."

"Has he gone, the limmer?" said he, taking up his wrath and his broken English at the same instant. "I will follow him to the world's end,—I will follow him to the devil."

"Hush, and make no rash promises," said his cousin; "for I rather think your journey would be the latter way; and you have heard, that it is easier going there than getting back again."

Castlecreaghy stared with astonishment; for, though, in his present mood, he would have had no objection to offer battle to Lord Gerald in the dominions of any terrestrial king, he was not sure what sort of offence duelling

might be in the territories of his Satanic majesty ; and whether the result might not be to detain him a denizen there. His cousin, however, solved this knotty case for him, by putting into his hand a copy of a journal, which contained authentic information of his Lordship's having, by his own deed, put an end to his career in this world.

“ Well, a well,” said Castlecreaghy, “ he has paid for all, and I am sakeless of the scaith. I will not curse the fallen foe of our house, who is indeed past all cursing now ; but poor Isabella ! your lot was a sad one, and sadly has your destroyer paid for it.”

The account was one of those varnishings of crime, which attempt to justify

suicide, upon the allegation of mental derangement, the agony of a mind too susceptible, and other words with which the hireling chronicle attempts to throw a shade of pity over hopeless immorality and demoniac despair ; and to pile up the mausoleum of sounding titles and noble qualities, together with the deep regrets of numerous friends, in order to gild the worst of terminations to the worst of lives. This was done in the most masterly manner in the present instance, probably by that secret spy, who had long watched the actions, and dogged the steps of his Lordship, and who had, at the same time, panted with iniquitous impatience for the possession of his property. Splendid ancestry, and towering genius,

were thrown into the scale, to counterpoise the weight of evil and disgrace which attached to his name, and through him to that of men; and it was lamented, that his Lordship, after having rapidly recovered his health, after physical illness, should have relapsed into lowness of spirits, under which he had laid violent hands upon himself.

The particulars of this deed of horror were widely circulated; and as an accurate knowledge of the facts was of the deepest interest to the near kinsman of the victim Isabella, he and his military friend advanced towards the spot; the pursuer having first made a merit of circumstances, by writing to Flora, that he had repented of that purpose of

revenge from which she had formerly dissuaded him ; dwelling largely upon the thankfulness which he himself felt, that the stain of blood in a private, though justifiable cause, was not on his hand.

As Castlecreaghy was on the continent at any rate, and as his mind was at ease, both upon the ground of the immorality of fighting, and the ridicule of not fighting, he resolved to examine the country for a few days. For this purpose, he and his friend agreed to journey together, both for the sake of companionship, and because the laird's French was a little the worse, not for the wear, but for the want of it.

In the course of their peregrinations, they had occasion to pass through a

small village, in a remote part of the Hainault, and as the day was Sunday, they resolved to attend church. The church was small, and the worshippers few, though very devout and orderly in their conduct. The priest made his appearance. He seemed as if both Time and Death had forgotten him. His figure was still tall, and it had once been muscular. His hair, what remained of it, was white as snow ; and there was a sternness and a firmness in his withered features, which told that he could not have been all his life accustomed to the full gifts and soft duties of the altar. He seemed more like one of those old, iron, and sinewy veterans, who are as reluctant to quit their posts before the arrows of dis-

ease as they erewhile were before the bullets of the enemy ; who seem to be a sort of indestructibles, and keep on in their skin-and-bone duration, while hundreds of young and plump men, whose frames have not been knit by the same discipline, are falling around them.

It seemed, too, as if this priest did not belong to the land where he was now performing pastoral duties ; and Castlecreaghy, who was an adept in the discriminations of clanship, pronounced him of the race of the Clan Gregor, though at which of the mishaps of that clan he might have left the mountains of Scotland, the laird took not upon himself to say.

This gave them, however, a greater

interest both in the priest and the service, than they might otherwise have felt ; and that interest was raised to the very height of curiosity, when they found the venerable father begin to chaunt not the Latin ritual of his church, but the good old Gaelic hunting song of *Ben Douran*.

Educated as Castlecreaghy had been in the true faith of the Romish church, and good catholic as we have every reason to consider him, we are by no means prepared to say that he was not to the full as much pleased at hearing the song of Caledonia in a strange land, as he would have been with the genuine words of the service. He did not regard the song as of divine origin, but it was so old that nobody could

trace an earthly one for it; and it was so familiar, that he could not help taking up the burden, and singing it at the very top of his voice, for which he received more credit from the congregation, upon the score of religious zeal, than he had previously got for many years. The priest, too, regarded him with very marked attention, although that attention was of a kind very different. Castlecreaghy's Gaelic told him, that he was at the last found out; and produced, upon his part, a desire of speaking with the stranger, which desire was reciprocal on the part of that stranger himself.

The service was concluded as soon as decency would permit; and when the worshippers had withdrawn, the priest

and the traveller met, and looked at one another for some time ; then, at the same instant, they propounded the important question—" Who and what are you ?"

The laird was the first to answer, and his answer proving satisfactory, the other confessed himself to be Duncan Macgregor, who had followed the fortunes of the Prince, both at home and abroad ; and who, having failed in obtaining in the army of Louis that military provision which he had expected, had, as a *dernier ressort*, betaken himself to the church ; had lived in the same retired place for many years, and performed his duty much to the satisfaction, and, he doubted not, to the spiritual edification of his flock. The

only deficiency which he had felt, (and he had felt that all along,) was the want of Latin, and this too he had supplied completely to the satisfaction of his people, in the way of which that morning's service was a specimen.

“ Well, well,” said the Laird, “ a Gaelic song before a Latin prayer for me, any day ; but how comes it that you have never visited the land and the graves of your ancestors ? You must have heard that there is no persecution against the followers of the Stuart now, and that the very King upon the throne pities his misfortunes and reveres his memory.”

“ God bless him for that ! God bless him for that !” said Duncan ; “ well would I like to lay my auld banes

among the rest at the chapel of St. Fillan ; but that would cost money, and though I can make shift to live here, money I have none.”

“ You shall go with me, and go immediately,” said Castlecreaghy ; and as soon as the old man could set his house in order, and find a successor, neither of which caused a waste of much time or much exertion, he set out, exulting in his heart, that, old as he was, he should yet set his foot upon his native heather, and sleep under it with his fathers.

The meeting with Duncan rendered the journey to Aix-la-Chapelle quite unnecessary ; for he was in possession of all the circumstances of Lord Gerald’s death, and these he detailed on

the journey home, at far greater length than it is necessary to detail them to the reader.

Returning health had not brought to him returning peace, nor did tasteless amusements and company reckless of his weal or his woe, hush the accuser within his bosom, or win sleep to veil in oblivion his uneasy couch. Like Macbeth, he murdered sleep:

———“ the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care.”

And like Macbeth, vengeance overtook him ; but not like Macbeth did he meet it with courage. Macbeth disdained “ to play the Roman fool, and fall on his own sword,” when beset by a powerful army, deserted and left almost alone ; but Lord Gerald play-

ed the Parisian fool, dying by his own hand rashly and ignobly. As he recovered strength, he had found that it was but strength to be consumed by a larger portion of internal agony.

While tortured within by the appalling memory of the miseries which he had inflicted upon that sex, of which he ought to have been the protector; he was, at the same time, alarmed from without; and as he saw no way by which he could flee from misery, he fled to crime; and shut the gates of future wickedness, in closing those of the past against all possibility of repentance.

So closed the scene upon one, eminently endowed by nature, and highly accomplished,—on one, high

in birth, and renowned for genius and acquirements,—on one, whose proud front told what he was, and whose studied gracefulness (artful though it was) obtained for him general admiration. If the abilities which he possessed, and the acquirements with which he was furnished, had been devoted to more noble, more rational, and more benevolent pursuits, how high might have been the pinnacle upon which he had stood ! Like the illustrious statesman and soldier, Argyll, he might have called into renown what went before, and covered with glory what was to come after,—he might have ornamented his family and name with gems of praise, such as properly became the mantle and the coronet ; and

it might have been said of him, as of that enlightened statesman and powerful and intrepid warrior, that he was,

“ ——— the State’s whole thunder born to wield,
And shake at once the Senate and the field.”

But his depraved mind, or his neglected youth, shaped for him another course ; and his heart, poisoned by grovelling pleasures, and sensual pursuits of the lowest and grossest description, was steeled against sensibility, although the word was ever hanging upon his lips. It hung there, however, in ridicule of the inward feeling, for the reality was a stranger to his heart and his actions.

Born to a princely heritage, high in the honour of his ancestors, and wild, free, and daring in his boyhood, he

was early surrounded by flatterers of both sexes ; and the strength of his mind was such, that while he made them minister to his haughtiness and his loose habits, he held them in the most profound contempt. This early intimacy with the worthless and the weak, and the vast elevation to which he felt himself raised above such characters, gave him false views of himself, of mankind, and of virtue itself. Finding himself so much elevated over these his only associates, he concluded that he was as much raised above all ; knowing that they were mean and worthless, he thence imputed meanness and worthlessness to the whole of society ; and perceiving that in their mouths, every name of virtue and feeling was an

empty sound, he foolishly concluded that the things themselves were a cheat ; and this led him to ridicule and trample upon every thing social and every thing sacred. This gave him a restlessness of heart, in which enjoyment was not pleasure ; and imposed upon himself a selfishness, which made him sacrifice alike friend and foe. Well versed in classical and scientific lore, he used that not to instruct or improve society, but to strike mankind with astonishment and horror. The fine arts, the witching powers of music, of painting, and of song, which have had so much influence in civilizing the world, were bestowed upon him in the most ample profusion ; but they were misplaced,—they attuned him not to the

sympathies,—they excited him not to deeds of beneficence. They set him up to the gape and the gaze of mankind, proud, high, and sparkling; but his elevation and his sparkle were those of a mountain of ice,—showy, but unprofitable;—while they dazzled the eye, they weakened it, and they withered every flower which ventured within the range of their cold and chilling atmosphere.

Of those flowers he had long been the spoiler; helpless women had, from his early infancy, been the victims of his fondest and most cruel sport. No one had studied that sex with more assiduousness, and none had studied it to more evil purpose; and the dedicating of his time to inglorious triumphs

over female virtue, was his leading crime in the brief day of his guilty prosperity, and the impelling cause in that last plunge of guilt and despair, which contributed to make his name at once the shame and terror of the virtuous.

The most cold, withering, and desolating scepticism, had marked his entrance into the gay world. A pity for superstition, (as he chose to term it,) went to lay all creeds level in one debasement of contempt; and, it may be, a lingering fear of retribution made him labour to eradicate from the minds of others all dread of those fearful punishments, which the event showed he could not eradicate from his own. As in his conduct he had laboured to debase man to the level of the brutes, so, by his

principles, he laboured to make himself believe that he was nothing better than a mere clod of the valley, a perishing and unaccountable portion of the soil. But to think of what he *might have been*, and to reflect upon what he was, is humiliating as it regards mankind, and, as it has reference to himself, dark, fearful and beyond expression.

Not the least guilty, and certainly one of the least justifiable of his projects, was the plan which he had laid for ruining the daughter of Glenmore, at a time when he was living upon the hospitality of her father ; when he knew that that father was in difficulties ; when he was affecting to relieve those difficulties ; and when he was

carrying on an under-plot for the ruin of her cousin. Nor was the enormity of the plan and the attempt the less, that in the main plot he failed in the execution. In his case, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* ceases to be a maxim of prudence. The suicide grave of Lord Gerald is a fit place whence to preach a homily of warning to those, who, in admiration of his misdirected talents, might be led to imitate his mischievous courses.

CHAP. VII.

When rocking on the distant tide,
Or roaming o'er the distant plain,
We think upon our young fireside,
“ O were we back to that again !”
But while we wish, the changeful hand
Of Time, leaves not a stone to tell
A tale, save haply this, “ the land
Forgets, though we remember well.”

THE truth of these lines, which has been often felt by those who have thought upon their native land through a long absence, was never more completely demonstrated, than in the case of Duncan Macgregor. His absence from his native hills had been the full

measure of two generations, according to the ordinary estimate of life; but during this long period, Scotland had never once been forgotten. At the dawn of morning and at the close of eve, his heart and his prayers were turned toward the little village in which he had drawn his breath; and notwithstanding his great age and the fact of his having become almost the oldest resident in the parish, where he substituted *Ben Douran* for the chaunt, he had no sooner obtained, through the kindness of Castlecreaghy, the means of returning to that village, than he set out by a vessel which was bound directly for Scotland.

When his foot first touched the soil of that country which he had loved and

remembered so well through so long a vista of years of cold, and bitter, and hopeless expatriation, he knelt down and returned thanks to that Being who had so ruled it, that he had been enabled again to see, in reality, that land toward which he had looked so often and so fondly in vision. When he had returned his thanksgiving, he kissed the soil, ere he arose from his kneeling position; and having risen and refreshed himself, he sped onward with more celerity than, at his time of life, could have been supposed.

As he came near the place of his nativity, the clear silver of every stream, and the varied contour of every hill, came full and fresh to his recollection. A new life shot through his veins, and

as he trod the glades which had been familiar to his infant feet, he felt much of the warmth, and some of the activity of youth. He turned the corner of the brown hill; he thought upon the steep and narrow path under the raven's rock, and how his stiffened limbs would be all too unsteady for the arduous task of threading it along. When, however, he arrived at the rock, the difficulty vanished. It was the steep and shelvy mountain path no more. The rock had been cut down and broken by the hammer, to form a safe and smooth carriage road; and the ford of the river, at which he had so often been obliged to pause, was spanned by the arch of a handsome bridge. The glen, was, in short, so

much metamorphosed by the arts of modern improvement, that he knew it not ; and when he came to the village, and hoped to find the same persons with whom he had sported in the light hours of childhood, permanent in old age as himself, in this he was likewise sadly mistaken. A single farm-house contained the whole population ; the village was swept away to the last stone ; the people were in their graves, or in the wilds of America ; and in the farm-house to which he bent his steps, he found the family of a sheep farmer from the south. Except the mountains and the rivers, every thing had been changed, and though the remembrance of all was fresh to him, there was not a single thing with which he

could exchange his sympathies. He sat down, as nearly as he could judge, upon the spot which was oldest and dearest to his memory ; and there, though his heart was subdued by time, and his eyes were dry through age, he could not help weeping,—weeping, not because he was as much, if not more, an alien in the land of his fathers, as he had been in that of a strange people, but because there was none left to whom he could tell the bitterness which he felt in consequence of the sad desolation of improvement, which enclosed him on every side. It was a place in which he could not tarry, and so he set out for the house of Castlecreaghy, in which he found a ready and welcome shelter, during the brief

days of a life so near its close. Even there, however, though he found countrymen and kindness, he met with no living thing, to which he was known ; and thus, after having been for many years a sojourner in a foreign land, he had returned to spend a few brief and weary days, a stranger in the land of his fathers.

When Castlecreaghy left Flanders, he brought with him another countryman. This was Colin Macintyre, the young soldier whom he had met upon his first landing on the continent, who was to have been his second in the event of the duel's taking place, and who became his travelling companion, and *cicerone* when that was rendered unnecessary.

Colin, though a mere soldier of fortune, was honourably descended, and the honour of his ancestors lost nothing by his conduct, either as a man or as a soldier. He was maternally descended from the Stuarts of Appin, and his grandfather had carried the banner of that brave clan when they acquitted themselves so well, but to so little purpose, at hapless Culloden. By the father's side he was nearly allied to the late General Maclachlan, and, as such, we need not say that he was a welcome guest at May Fair.

Though the place where Captain Macintyre was born was at no great distance from Glenmore Castle, and though he was but a few years older than the amiable heiress of that man-

sion, he knew her only by the report of her kinsman, Castlecreaghy, and the general rumour of the mishaps of her father's house. Brief was the time that was spent at May Fair, however, ere they became as well acquainted as if their infancy had been spent together. Together it had, indeed, been spent, although from the difference of years and of situation of life, there had been little intercourse between the son of a retired veteran lieutenant, and the only daughter of a great and revered chief.

Flora loved to talk of the localities of her country, and there was not a spot in the whole wide domain of Glenmore with which Colin was not acquainted. These formed the sub-

ject of endless conversation, and as the soldier was as great an admirer of Highlanders and the Highlands as his fair countrywoman, their conversations tended more to chase the melancholy of Flora than any thing which had occurred during her stay in London. Her heart had always been with her clan, and that her conversation was of them also, could not but be delightful. Every rock seemed more sublime, every hill more green, every birch tree shed a fresher fragrance, every stream ran more clear, and every cataract dashed more sparkling, in the descriptions of the young soldier.

Mrs. Maclachlan could not but notice the pleasure which her adopted daughter seemed to take in the conversation

of the Captain, and though she imputed it to a cause somewhat wide of the true one, she was not disposed to discourage it. True, the whole inheritance of the soldier, was his honour ; but that was hereditary, and by no means likely to be squandered by the present holder. Together with honour the most unsullied, and a profession the most respectable in the eyes of the widow of one who had fallen in the service of his country, Colin Macintyre was in himself all that a lady could admire. His appearance was handsome and manly ; his abilities, naturally good, had been improved by education, and softened by the discipline of the military life ; his manners, though dignified, were mild, and his heart was pure and

untainted. If, indeed, the good lady had studied to select a husband for her favourite, the chance is that this would have been the man. It could not, therefore, but afford her pleasure to think that this relation, so much in unison with her wishes, had every chance of being made in a manner the most delicate.

In the mean time, however, the conclusion of Mrs. Maclachlan was premature, if it was not erroneous. The daughter of Glenmore thought not of love, and the soldier of fortune ventured not to aspire to one, whose family he had looked up to as placed upon an eminence so much above him. Flora, however, liked his conversation, because it was respecting the scenes

and objects dearest to her heart ; and he liked her conversation, he in the mean time knew not why.

Castlecreaghy, who was all attention to the feelings and the interests of his cousin, and who knew not that she was nominated heiress to Mrs. Mac-lachlan, would have been favourable to a match ; partly from the respect which he felt for Colin as a countryman, and a man of honour and virtue, and partly in the hope that the General's widow would, in that event, enable her young kinsman to set down in comfort, and be the powerful and hospitable Glenmore. In this purpose he thought it but fair to hint to the soldier, that the vows of Flora were in the grave of Strathantin ; and that although he

was against the idea of one so worthy of being loved, mourning a whole life in gloomy solitude, he thought any approach to his kinswoman ought to be made with the greatest caution, else the certainty of a refusal would be the consequence. He added, that she had, to his certain knowledge, refused two or three lords, and that therefore she was not to be won but by a long and assiduous siege.

This good counsel of Castlecreaghy's had the usual effect of similar good counsel; it kindled the flame which it was meant to temper. It inspired a love and a hope, which, without its exciting influence, would never have existed, except under the form of the most distant and cautious admiration.

The very process which the Captain took to prevent his falling in love, or allowing himself to pay any attentions to Flora, other than those which a brave and honourable man always pays to a modest and beautiful woman,—had the effect of making him pay those attentions. Being involuntary, and even unknown, upon his part, they were of course artless, and had the honesty of common but respectful friendship stamped upon them ; but still one who was skilled in the arcana of the heart, and who was accustomed to watch the dawnings of the tender passion, would not have been slow in prophecyng as to the result.

Colin Macintyre reasoned upon all the grounds of caution which had been.

stated by Castlecreaghy, and added some new grounds of his own,—such as the disparity of birth, and the impropriety of making any advances to a female, who, being indebted, in the mean time, to the bounty of his kinswoman, might, by the world, be presumed to be influenced by that kinswoman. In the judgment of reason, those objections were, no doubt, very cogent, and the arguments which the Captain founded upon them, were most logical ; but “ Love laughs ” at logic, as well as “ at Locksmiths,” and the Captain got deeply into it by the very process which he fancied had demonstrated to him, not only that he was, but that he ought to remain, “ fancy free.”

This unsuspected fetter of the heart entwined itself the more closely that it was not observed; and as true love seems to take a particular delight in throwing obstacles in its own way, the distance between Flora and the Captain, which had been considerable at the beginning, increased every time he saw her, or thought of her; and the sum of these increments was not only too great to allow of hope, but too great even for calculation.

This, we believe, is a change of opinion which all have felt who have truly loved. We meet an object, passing fair, and passing accomplished; we treat her with that civility and attention which a modest woman always merits, and from men of sense always

receives ; but we think of her, and of our attentions to her, as nothing more than matters of course. Some circumstance, however, — a circumstance often very casual and trivial in itself, changes our civility into the tender passion ; and then the hands of a thousand sylphs are at work, limning her with every beauty, and adorning her with every grace, while upon their little, fluttering, and many-tinted wings they raise her to an elevation, in looking up to which we turn giddy, and which we despair, though we desire, to reach.

Fortified by the lines of reason and resolve, the Captain thought he was quite safe in paying his daily visits in May Fair ; and, just that he might

enjoy the pleasure of Flora's society, he made those visits of no common length. As, however, there was not a single appearance of preferring a suit, or even a look or a word which could excite suspicion in the most lynx-eyed observer, the visits of the Captain were welcome to all parties. Mrs. Mac-lachlan found in him one who could follow her through all the details of that course of important service, by which the General had so deservedly risen to honour. Flora heard him talk with enthusiasm of those mountains which were so dear to herself; and the Highlander counted him as a younger brother.

In all this he might have been completely happy; but there was a sense of

vacancy in his heart which was still increasing, and, as he retired from those visits which were so agreeable to him, he was always involuntarily humming to himself,—

“ Ah ! why should Fate sic pleasure take,
Life’s dearest bands untwining ?
Or why sae sweet a flower as Love,
Depend on Fortune’s shining ?”

Still, his self command was such, that he betrayed not the least symptom of the fire which was consuming him ; and the confidence which this self command had procured him, made him be chosen as *cavalier du garde* to Flora, on her morning rides, in which situation he conducted himself with so much propriety, that there was not the slightest ground for alarm, and his ap-

pearance was so dignified and so prepossessing, that Flora drew down upon herself the envy of many less-hand-somely-escorted belles.

Upon one of these occasions, just at the entrance of the King's Road, the whiskered figure in the cloak stood watching them ; and perceiving Flora accompanied by a handsome young man, darted at her a look such as the lightning flashes, when it is to overwhelm that upon which it alights, in ruin, muffled itself more deeply in its mantle, and muttering, " I know thee ! " strode away.

Flora was dreadfully agitated by the unexpected appearance, and the obvious menace ; but she had presence of mind enough to conceal her alarm, in

order that she might not compromise the safety of her companion, that she might not attract public notice, and that she might render mischief, if not impossible, at least as improbable as circumstances would admit. For, as Flora had no wish to be wooed, she had no desire that she should be the subject of general conversation ; and that any knight should break a lance for her, would have been inflicting upon her the severest pain. She therefore bore her present alarm, as the Captain did his habitual wishing and fearing, without a single remark.

Luckily, too, the Highlander did not perceive the *incognito*, and thus the fact, both of his appearance, and of the uneasiness which that appearance

had occasioned, was confined to the breast of the daughter of Glenmore. The paleness that had succeeded to the crimson which that unexpected rencontre had brought across her cheek, and which remained after her return home, was easily accounted for, upon the ground that her horse had started ; and the painful anxiety which disturbed her rest, and made her for some time decline going out, was accounted for by the notion of the calamity which had lately befallen her unnamed friend, having again returned to her active imagination.

Other matters, too, conspired to occupy the attention of those who, had they been left idle, would perhaps, in their anxiety to relieve the disquietude

of Flora, have made some advances toward its cause. Mrs. Maclachlan and Castlecreaghy had found out that some of the claims upon the late Glenmore were fraudulent and unjust, and they were, unknown to Flora, taking the necessary steps for getting these set aside. This they were obliged to do without Flora's knowledge, for such was her indifference to all pecuniary interests, and extreme delicacy in every thing that related to her father's name and memory, that had she known of their plans, she would most probably have frustrated them by withholding her consent.

Another circumstance protracted the stay of Castlecreaghy in London ; but that circumstance was of deeper

importance, as involving more intimately the fortunes of her who had seen so many reverses, and who had come out of all her trials, like gold seven times refined; and therefore it must be detailed with more caution, and at greater length.

CHAP. VIII.

“ ————— The face itself
Is oft the deepest mask that we can wear ;
While that which for concealment we put on,
Betrays us and our purpose.”

OLD PLAY.

THE gay haunts of the metropolis had never many attractions for the daughter of Glenmore ; and the few that they once had were now upon their travels with her Emma. She had always tasted very sparingly of that sparkling, but too frequently tainted cup, to which the world give the name of the

cup of pleasure. Glittering spectacles and crowded assemblies were never welcome to her ; and she had a total distaste for the flirtings of the belles, and the flutterings of fops,—for the feverish avarice and anxiety of the gaming table, which but too frequently empty both the heart and pocket of all their worth,—and for the idle levity, the useless parade, and the but too frequently unseemly commingling of modern balls. Even the drama received but a very qualified share of her approval. She would have relished the accurate delineations of nature and the faithful development of the virtues of social life, in comedy ; and she would have admired the deep probings into the strong passions of the

heart, and the display of national and martial glory and heroic sentiment, which ought to form the materials of tragedy ; but she did not like those gaudy things in which the glare of the picture atones for the meagreness of the piece ; in which the brute creation are pressed in to eke out the dullness and lameness of the human performer, and in which unmeaning intrigue, broad ribaldry, and empty pageantry, have made the stage any thing but a copy of life that could be lived or deserved to be imitated.

Of music she was fond, perhaps to excess ; and dancing, as far as grace, activity and chearfulness were concerned, was both natural and congenial to her ; but she hated the pantomime *vis a vis*

of the quadrille, as something improper—as, howsoever small had been her intercourse with the gay world, she had been forced to see in it the vehicle of what ought not to have been seen ; and she disliked the sensual familiarity of the waltz under any circumstances whatever.

But civility to the relation of her patroness allowed her to give a momentary violation to her own desire of retirement. Accustomed to the liveliness of military life, and to the freedom of continental society—a freedom which is so much a matter of course that it carries not with it either the reality or the suspicion of vice, he was fond of all the amusements of the British metropolis ; and as both that

metropolis and its amusements were, in a great measure, new to him, he entered into them with so much fondness, but such perfect correctness,¹ that to refuse him this indulgence during the brief space he had proposed to stay in London, would have touched pretty closely upon being a want of common civility.

The handsome person of Captain Macintyre, and the candid dignity of his military deportment, gained him a number of admirers, and as his residence abroad gave him a facility both in using the language and in describing the customs of other nations, his company was as instructive as his appearance was pleasing ; while the modesty of his manners was such that

he never gave offence, and his dignity such as prevented any offence being given him.

The Highland Laird, who was also absolutely quizzed into an occasional attendance at such parties by his young and gay countryman, appeared like a fish out of water—a perfect exotic among the sprigs of town growth. Of course he praised the appearance and performances of his fair cousin, and was not indifferent to the manly bearing of his young countryman ; but as he cared not much what opinion the “creatures of London,” as he termed them, formed of him, he expressed his notions of their amusements with the most perfect freedom. The dancing was “trash”—the waltzers were

“ midges (gnats) in a mist”—the opera, idle nonsense. Of the male singers he declared that they would be better employed in “ herding sheep on a hill, or thrashing barley in a barn ;” and even the flexible-throated singers of soft Italy, received their sentence of condemnation. He swore that the music of Rossini had “ neither tune, time, nor turn,”—that the notes of Catalani put him in mind of “ the worrying of a cat, or the sticking of a pig,”—and that he would not give one “ good pibroch on the bagpipe for the screeching of all their flutes and fiddles; or one good Highland song over a bowl of the mountain dew, for all their squeaking and squalling in a place where there was no ex-

change of friendship and nothing to wash it down at need.

For these rusticities, which the worthy gentleman did not express in whispers, quizzing came upon him from a pretty ample circumference; but it came unperceived, and so Castlecreagh had his criticism, and they enjoyed the triumph of what appeared to themselves as their superior cultivation in taste. His way of life was a plain “do as you would be done by” sort of system, which led him not to suppose in others that ridicule of a difference of opinion which he himself knew not how to practise.

The round of amusements had been run, and Captain Macintyre, gratified as he secretly was, at being thus in the

presence of her whom he had resolved to regard with indifference, had found these amusements in themselves not precisely what he had anticipated, and therefore even he began to be a little tired of them. The very first hint of this was seized by Castlecreaghy with the greatest avidity, and made the foundation of an urgent desire to return to his native mountains, which had become necessary, as well to gratify his feelings, as to watch over his possessions. This desire had been frequently stated to the General's widow, but she, anxious to afford her young friend as much amusement as the visit could afford him, and pleased, at the same time, to see the melancholy of her adopted daughter suspended, if not re-

moved, had always put them off by one or other of those excuses, which kindness ever finds for its own exercise.

When she was about consenting to the repeated solicitations, a call of charity put in its claim for a little further delay ; and, in fact, had led to the circumstance to which allusion was made in the preceding chapter. This call of charity was an invitation of the party to a species of entertainment, for which neither Mrs. Maclachlan nor her adopted child had any great relish, but which was quite familiar to Captain Macintyre, and would afford Castlecreaghy something to talk about all the remainder of his life. It was a musical concert, followed by a masked ball,

to which a carefully selected company were to be admitted by tickets, which cost a pretty high price ; and the proceeds of it were to be applied to support the widows and educate the children of a certain number of soldiers, who had fallen in the defence of their country ; but who, from the shortness of their service, or from some accidental circumstance, had not had their families provided for by the public.

Mrs. Maclachlan's original intention was to attend the first branch of the entertainment, but not the second ; but she was at length induced to attend both by the earnest solicitations of the soldier, seconded by those of Castlecreaghy. To her acquiescence in these solicitations, there was the less

objection, that the party was in itself respectable, and that the object of it was praiseworthy; and thus she was induced to admit, that going *en famille* and in plain dominos to a masquerade, could be no great harm if that masquerade was select, and done for charity's sake. It was resolved that they should keep together; that Flora should take the arm of her cousin, whose native garb would be mask enough for him, and that Mrs. Maclachlan should take the arm of Captain Macintyre, who again would do very well in his regimentals. Thus the masking of half the party was rendered unnecessary; and the other half would be secure in their dominos. Flora hesitated, but Castlecreaghy, who, upon

most occasions, had given way to her wishes, declared that the party would be spoiled without her ; and so she got into the carriage, though not without a little reluctance.

A few minutes brought them to the door of the Argyll Rooms, nor was it long ere the sounds of the concert attracted the delight of Flora and excited the criticism of her protector. But notwithstanding the pleasure which the music afforded her, and the additional entertainment she might have received from the mingled expressions of wonder and dislike which were ever escaping from Castlecreaghy, Flora was by no means at ease. The sky of the mind lowers before the mental thunder, just as the sky of nature lowers before

that thunder which shakes the hills ; and there hung over the spirits of Flora a gloominess, which, had she been observing it rather than feeling it, would have told her that something was on the wing of destiny.

Castlecreaghy, who did not relish the music, was all impatience for the masquerade ; and no sooner had he mixed in the motley but well-regulated throng, than his senses were completely confounded, and he could not help making use of ejaculations, which would have proved, to any one acquainted with the Highlands, that he at least was no masker. The first thing that astonished him, was the great number of his countrymen, who, from almost all the clans of the north,

seemed to have met upon this occasion. When, however, he went up to them, and accosted them in that language, without the capacity of speaking which, the “ garb of old Gaul ” ought not to be worn, they were entirely mute ; and more than once he was upon the point of mauling a refractory member of the Clan-more, for not condescending to speak to the foremost wadsetter of that illustrious clan. Flora hinted to him that they were Englishmen in disguise, and though this did not increase his admiration of them, it induced him to let them alone, and to direct his attention to those who were in other characters.

Now these characters,—(and it is the case with characters in the world as well as characters at a masquerade,) were

generally ill supported and out of keeping ; and the most easy, natural, and graceful, were those who assumed no character at all.

The mask is common in life : just so was it here ; and whether the dominoes, or *domini*, were under the form of the long robe, the sober black, or “ motley was your only wear,” it mattered little. In both cases many are and were the cloaks ; and of all descriptions in disguise, out of disguise, single and married,—as some marry for a cloak, some for a coat ; some gain a suit, and some are non-suited.

Castlecreaghy’s tall figure, which his costume displayed, and his genuine dialect of the mountains, which it was equally impossible to hide, brought

round him a party of sailors, who teased him, the one half to take a passage for Leith in their smack, and the other half to take a passage for Inverness. At first he took the whole matter in earnest, and fairly set about cheapening for his freight ; and it was with some difficulty that Flora could undeceive him. When, however, that was effected, he began to be so severe upon the sailors, that they were glad “ to wear ship and sheer off.”

They had not been long gone, however, when he was assailed by another party, who came upon him in the shape of Cumberland graziers, and interrogated him about the price of sheep and black cattle, in so knowing a style, that even Flora was unable to convince him

they were hoaxing him ; and in consequence, he played the Highland proprietor so well, that upon both sides that was pronounced to be the most perfect piece of acting which had occurred during the night. An end was put to it, however, by one of these drovers offering to bargain for Flora, as a specimen of his Highland stock ; and this indignity to the representative of his chief, so acted upon the hot blood of the Highlander, as to procure for the other a pretty smart box on the ear. As this was no place for the *duello*, and as the southern drover was instantly pronounced to be in the wrong—inasmuch as his part was assumed while that of the other was real, and inasmuch as he had offered an indig-

nity to a female, the triumph was allowed to remain on the side of the Highlander, while the drovers went in quest of other purchases.

He was not, however, left long at his ease ; for scarcely had the drovers gone, when he was assailed by a whole posse of watchmen, with a constable of the night at their head, who accused him of having smuggled a foreign tongue into the company, and for having in his possession a notorious heart-stealer.

“ Heart-stealer ! and notorious ! ” replied the mountaineer ; “ if I had you upon the tap o’ Mamsallaghan, I should put you from being notorious, and the devil a heart I should leave you for anybody to steal.”

This speech produced an immoderate fit of laughter, and an attempt to seize the Highlander ; but Captain Macintyre stepped in, and very politely and dextrously prevented a *row*, by assuring the *Charlies* that he was the officer on duty for the night, and that as such, it belonged to him to keep the peace.

“ Good, very good indeed, your honour,” said the *Charlies*, pulling off their hats, bowing, and retiring well pleased with the display which they had made in their new vocation.

The next *customer* with whom the Laird met, was an Irish stage-coachman, who very politely offered him “ a place in the basket, which would set off as soon after the coach as his honour pleased ; and as for the swate crature,

if she would consent to be booked at the office in Church Street, he would give her an inside birth all the world over for pure love."

"And where am I to be taken up," said Castlecreaghy, resolved to parry a few thrusts with this individual at least.

"At the Goose and Gridiron, to be sure," said Pat, which produced another laugh, and another rising of choler in the Laird.

The next assailant was a medical gentleman, full of wise saws, which he was ever and anon larding with dog Latin; and upon first coming in contact with the old Highlander, who almost upset him in brushing past, he exclaimed, "*Animus vester ego*, (mind your eye) old Rory, or you will over-

turn the whole science of medicine.”

“ But (turning to Flora) here is metal more attractive”—“ *Nec prosunt domino, quæ prosunt omnibus artes*”—

“ throw physic to the dogs,” &c. ; for there is no cure of love in it,—it is the *immedicabile vulnus*; and thou, fair dame, art certainly a divinity—“ *incessu patuit dea*;” Venus and Vulcan, upon my soul, or something *sui generis*.”

“ We want none of your drugs,” said Castlecreaghy.

“ *Bene, bene, respondere*,” replied the Doctor.

“ Look you, sir,” said the Laird, waxing angry, “ I am a plain rough North Briton ; and——”

“ I take,” replied the Doctor,—“ I

take. You are from the very *Ultima Thule*; you are one of the—*penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos*. So—*tolle curam tibi*, and I will meet thee at Philippi—at May Fair.”

Castlecreaghy stared, and the Doctor went off nodding, and saying, “*Iterum iterumque vale;*” and he immediately met the Dowager Duchess of Tynedale, with her remaining daughter, and another lady of more slender form and more fascinating appearance.

“*Nox erat, et cælo fulgebat LUNA sereno inter minora sidera,*” said he, bowing profoundly.

A new character began now to arrest their attention, and to arrest it so intensely, as that for them, the sailors,

the watchmen, the quacks, the harlequins, and all the other beings of the night, were forgotten. That character is, however, of sufficient importance to have its introduction in the next chapter.

CHAP. IX.

“ A pilgrim from a Paynim land,
I hither wend your mirth to see ;
And when that mirth I once have scanned,
I hide me in a far countrie.”

THE WIDOWED WANDERER.

IF life resembles a masquerade in many things, a masquerade resembles life in this one,—that those who dazzle us most upon their first appearance, are the soonest forgotten, and that characters, which are scarcely heeded at their entrance, and which take their steps cautiously and covertly, as if they

wished not to be seen, gradually gain upon us, ultimately absorb the whole of our attention, and render the light and showy beings, of whom they usurp the place, lost or indifferent to our notice.

This was the case in the present instance: the gaudy characters who had set themselves expressly up for admiration, and who had hoped to attract the whole attention and carry off the whole eclat of the evening, were, at least in as far as the party from May Fair were concerned, jostled from their place, by one who had, at first sight, seemed to promise very little.

This was a pilgrim wrapt in a coarse grey cloak, with a palmer's staff in his hand, and an escallop shell in his

cap, with a scrip, a bottle, and a book, suspended from his girdle. In austerity he seemed a perfect Anchorite ; and while he shunned all questions as to himself, he evinced no disposition to question others. When teased by the younger and gayer part of the assemblage, he always contrived to put them to the blush, by replying to them in a language in which they could not rejoin ; so that he was seldom twice assailed by the same individual. In his person he was tall and powerful, and his gait and gesture were, not excepting Captain Macintyre in his smart uniform, the most graceful, as well as the most dignified and commanding, in the room. Though his face was covered by a mask of double crape, which

concealed the form of his features and the expression of his eye, yet those skilled in physiognomy, which ever preserves a balance between the handsomeness of the face and the elegance of the bearing, would have been at no loss to have pronounced, that he, at least, gained nothing by his mask.

For a long time he kept himself apart from every one, and strode along the well-thronged floor with as much of the air and unconcern of a solitary, as if he had been crossing the African desert. There was a confounding air about him: he was evidently an object of pretty general notice; and yet that notice seemed held in some incomprehensible fetters, so as to be unable to disclose or exercise itself. After a

while, however, he made a hesitating but haughty advance toward the May Fair party, who now kept all together for the joint purpose of preventing farther annoyance to the laird, and of enjoying each others remarks upon the scene and the actors.

Castlecreaghy was the one of the groupe whom the stranger selected to open a communication with the whole. He approached the laird, and in a strain of much softness, though the voice was evidently a feigned one, entered into close conversation with him; and in order the more completely to gain his confidence, assailed him on his weak side,—namely, the superiority of the country over the town; and the superiority of that country, in whose costume

the laird appeared, over all the countries of the world. This case he put strongly, but he put it delicately ; and while he was flattering Castlecreaghy as much and as successfully as it was possible for man to be flattered, he so managed it in the application, that it appeared to be no flattery at all.

When he had thus secured a willing ear and a ready belief, he began to mingle his declaration of love for remote and romantic lands, with a portion of the history of his own wanderings. He stated that he had seen much, and wandered far in search of happiness and peace, but had never been able to find them ; that the world was to him a wilderness, and life a dreary waste : yet that he, too, had once, when life was

young and hopes were unclouded, been a gatherer of mountain flowers, and a hunter of the roe ; that he had looked out from his own

“ donjon tower and minaret,”

and had marked the sun setting over wide and witching domains, in which nature had raised her mountains high, and scooped out her vallies deep ; that wherever his glance was then directed, it fell upon possessions which he could call his own ; that he had brushed the spangles of early dew from the clothing of his own hills ; and that clothing (he lowered his voice to a whisper) had been —what it had been he said not : but added that he had, with hound and bugle in his train, met the orb of day,

standing upon the same rock upon which it had been met by a long line of his ancestors ; that he had been happy in a people attached to him from his infancy ; and that he had been buoyed up in hopes as fair as ever dawned on a son of man : but that all now was sadly changed,—the lands, though still *for* him, were now nothing *to* him ; that the winds now whistled through the halls of his fathers,—that there was none there to welcome a stranger,—that the arms, by which those lands had been won and kept, hung corroding by neglect and time,—that the people were wandering neglected,—and that his very dogs had forgotten the sound of their master's voice.

There was something in this de-

scription which reminded both Castlecreaghy and his cousin of the desolation which had come over the chief and clan of Glenmore ; and there was nothing in their whole knowledge of Britain, to which they could so well, or indeed at all compare it. This excited a deeper sympathy in them both, than would have been induced by the mere circumstances of the pilgrim's story, although they had known all those circumstances to be correct. In his manner, indeed, there was evidence that he was not altogether an actor ; for his words hung too much upon the lip, for being mere words of course,—no man could have so spoken, unless to a great extent, at least, he had so felt.

“Your’s is a strange country,” said Castlecreaghy; “it puts me in mind of Scotland in the forty-five.”

“If it be not a strange country,” said the pilgrim, “it has used me strangely: Where I hoped to be remembered, I am forgotten; and where I trusted to meet with love, I received nothing but neglect. Vows to me have been considered as fit only for breaking; and if I have met with so much perfidy in the land of my fathers, and from those leagued to me by blood, and as I had hoped, by stronger and by dearer ties, what can the world present to me but an idle and unmeaning vacancy,—a cold coffin—a sepulchre which contains the useless lum-

ber of the external shape, after mind has departed.”

“ He is just the same as old Glenmore was, and many other brave men besides,” said Castlecreaghy; “ he has been for kindness sake, and for true loyalty, taking the part of his rightful prince; that prince has not been successful, and they have driven him from his native country. Suppose we should ask him to spend a summer in Glenmore ?”

“ Not so fast, cousin,” said Mrs. Maclachlan, “ your Highland hospitality, though a very excellent thing in the Highlands, is a little precipitate, and you must excuse me for saying it, a little ridiculous in London, and

especially at a masquerade. I give the pilgrim all manner of credit for the style in which he acts his part ; he does it with great accuracy certainly, and in such a way, as that it can offend nobody ; but we must, at the same time, take care that it does not deceive any body. We have no reason to suppose that you, Mr. Pilgrim, have any desire to impose on us as a man, but we must just caution our cousin there, whose feelings you seem to have interested so deeply in your favour, that as a pilgrim, you are an impostor, and will to-morrow enjoy a very hearty laugh at his credulity.”

“ I am no impostor, lady,” said he, deepening his tone, and imparting to it a still greater air of heart-felt since-

rity ; “ I am no impostor ; but a true pilgrim, and, like most pilgrims, I wander in expiation of the falsehood of others, as well as of my own follies. Think not that I would impart my sorrow to the vulgar world,—that I would lay open a bleeding heart to the cold and careless touch of mere curiosity. But here, unknowing and unknown as I am, it is solace to complain. I might have complained to the many wastes of the world over which I have travelled, but wastes have no ears ; and I might have complained to the many thousands of human beings who may, under another name, and in another garb, have heard of me, but though they have ears, they have already convinced me, that, instead of

having hearts to feel, they have only tongues to deride. Here, however, I meet with listening, and it gives me pleasure ; for though I did not, as I trust, as I do—in some of you, perceive a heart ready to sympathise with me, yet the very fact of my being unknown, must prevent me from being derided.”

There was an expression of feeling in the manner in which this was delivered, that took hold of the attention, and partially, at least, won the credulity of more than Castlecreaghy. Mrs. Maclachlan and Captain Macintyre, accustomed as they had been, the one to the world and the other to masked exhibitions, remained sceptical ; but not so the daughter of Glen-

more. The tale sounded to her like a tale of truth; it was a tale, too, of which she was anxious for the continuation. Like Desdemona, she thought—

“ ’Twas pitiful, ’twas wondrous pitiful.”

And though Flora had no idea, at least, no well-formed one, of wishing,

“ That Heaven had made her such a man,”

yet we are not sure whether, since the certainty of Strathantin’s death, any twinge of pity, so nearly affiliated to love, had shot through her heart, as the one excited by the tale of this unknown pilgrim.

Let it not be thought that this random twinge (and it was but a random one) was at variance either with

Flora's respect for the memory of her lover, or with the modesty of the female character. It was no such thing, and although she had rejected the suits of nobles, there was nothing out of character in her feeling thus for one who proffered no suit. There was something in the stranger's history which bore a good deal of similarity to parts of her own. He had not, indeed, said that he had met with any treacherous Lord Gerald, or any plundering Mac Fleecers and Mac Skinners ; he had not hinted that any parent of his had been, through misfortune, brought to an untimely grave ; but he had hinted, and more than hinted, that he was even now an outcast from the land of his fathers, and, in this respect,

his situation, though analogous in kind, was severer in degree, than that of Flora. She, too, was a sojourner in a strange land ; but in that land she had never been left without a friend, even in the severest of her trials ; while he, if his story could be believed, and it had much the appearance of truth, was a wanderer in the wide world, friendless and alone.

“ May I ask you, good pilgrim, to proceed with your narrative ? ” said Flora, in a tone which it would have been difficult to resist.

He came round to her side of the groupe, and in a voice still more softened and subdued, he resumed—
“ I have traversed the whole continent of Europe without finding ease to my

afflictions. I have experienced dangers by sea and by land—attacks of banditti and the persecutions of barbarians, and all the horrors of tempest and shipwreck. Yet continued I my pilgrimage even to the Holy Land, where the crescent has succeeded to the cross,—where human gore pollutes the soil whence peace and mercy were first promulgated to mankind,—where tyranny holds the wretched native in her grasp, and menaces the Christian traveller with plunder and with death,—where the blackest perfidy and the most atrocious crimes are familiar from habit,—and where, (as he spoke these words, he watched anxiously the effect which they might produce on his

hearer) where imprisoned beauty sighs out a miserable existence—torn from innocence, from loved relations, and, perchance, from the dear object of plighted vows, (Flora shuddered) and is made the slave, aye, and worse than the slave, of the brutal passions of her oppressor.”

As he spoke these words, his finger, in the earnestness with which they were delivered, touched the arm of Flora. That arm was triply fortified by the glove, the gown, and the domino; and yet she knew not how, it felt as if it had been touched by a live coal. This incomprehensible sensation seemed to be reciprocal, for the stranger shuddered in his turn, folded

his arms together, and though he laboured to conceal it, he heaved a painful and stifled sigh.

Recovering himself, however, and putting on (as far as he could put on) an air of indifference, he continued—
“ But let me turn from those scenes of agony, which seem as painful in the recital to you, as they were in the experience to myself, and let us hope for all, to whom hope is not utterly lost. Let us trust, that the sun of freedom, and the holy light of the pilgrim’s faith, will not only once more shine upon the scenes in which that faith had its beginning, but that freedom and science will yet revisit the Greek, amidst the ruins of those splendid structures, where I have so often been lost in

thought, and where I have mourned over tombs and columns now broken and crumbling away, but which immortalized a people, famed alike for liberty and for the sciences—for arms, and for the arts. Yet what avail those to the wretched living? Why, just as much as avail to myself all my early bright prospects of life—all my ambitious views of felicity—and all my fond dreams of happiness, which are now consigned to a remembrance worse than the grave, leaving me more lonely and more wretched than if the tomb had shut its clay-cold gates upon all that I ever held dear. To my native land I dare not look, for shadows, clouds, and darkness, rest upon it; and yet without that land, my torment is greater

than though I were suffering the stings of conscience for the most diabolical crimes.”

The deep and powerful manner in which the pilgrim was affected, began now to shew that he was no actor ; and Flora, moved by the story of his sufferings—more intensely, perchance, in consequence of their having taken no specific shape, asked her cousin to repeat that offer which Mrs. Maclachlan had set aside when formerly made. Castlecreaghy drew him aside,—requested to know if he could do any thing to serve him—inquired if he were under any apprehensions of danger in his native country—described to him the security and tranquillity he would enjoy among the Scottish moun-

tains—and threw out hints that he was anxious to know, and might fairly be trusted with, the cause of the exile and pilgrimage, which had been shadowed forth in so mysterious, yet so forcible a manner.

“ I mourn not for myself,” replied the pilgrim. “ I have borne much, and could bear much more. Against the shafts of common oppression, I lift up the double shield of a determined spirit, and of religious faith ; but I mourn, and I am miserable for one who was the delight of my childhood—the companion of my youth—my stimulus to every undertaking—my world—the very star of my destiny. She has been ungrateful ; she has been false.”

“ And is she another’s ?” said Flora,

reckless of what she said, and pursuing some dream of her own.

“ O yes,” replied he, in an altered tone, and a tone in which there was some of the bitterness of envy—“ You, lady, out-travel the pilgrim there, although you choose not to go the full length of the journey. She is another’s—aye, and worse than that, but I *need* reveal no more. I need not attempt to awaken your pity, lady, for one “crazed with care, and crossed in hapless love”—for one dejected and broken-hearted, who has forsworn family and friends,—who will be the last of his race, and live to see his possessions, which have descended to him through more generations than he can live years, pass without resistance and

without question into the hands of aliens.”

At this moment, the horror of the narrative had given Flora a deadly paleness. Mrs. Maclachlan, who had, during the greater part of it, been separated from them by some matters which had attracted the Captain’s attention, rejoined them.

“What is the matter, my dear child?” said she. “You look as if you were sick almost to death.”

“Oh, madam,” said Flora, “the story of this pilgrim is so affecting, and he himself seems so wretched.”

The pilgrim turned away, and, by instantly bending his body, seemed thirty years older than he had previously done during the evening.

“ Do not let a masquerade tale affect you,” said Captain Macintyre, who began to feel a good deal for Flora. Idle fellows will be telling idle stories upon all such occasions ; but they are good for nothing except being laughed at.”

The pilgrim shot up again to his former height, and notwithstanding the mild habit which he wore, his air was not unlike that of a warrior.

“ We must know more about you, Sir Pilgrim,” said the Captain ; “ and perhaps we may meet again. Perhaps we can relieve you ?”

“ Perhaps not,” said the pilgrim ; “ it has ever been a maxim with me, that those whom we have met in the shades of departed time, are best met

again in the shades of future oblivion.” Turning to Flora, “ Lady, farewell”—then stretching out his hand—“ hand to hand is holy palmer’s kiss.”

Flora shrunk back. “ Then knowest thou these pearls ?—they are from the ocean’s darkest deep—whose waters cannot quench some fires, or cover some frailties.” He dashed them on the ground, and vanished in an instant.

Flora shrieked—fell into a fit, and did not recover from it till she opened her eyes in her bed at May Fair, under the agony of a burning fever, and so disturbed in her imagination, that she scarcely could distinguish the surgeon, who was attempting to bring relief, and the good old lady, who was endeavouring to administer consolation.

The pearls were very like part of a suit which Flora had once known ; but how came they into the possession of this incomprehensible pilgrim ? Flora was in no condition to ask ; and even though she had, who was to answer ?

CHAP. X.

“ What is that nameless thing, which only comes
In night and darkness, as it were by stealth,
And vanishes before the morning dawn,
Like an unholy vision ?”

OLD PLAY.

“ THERE is some strange mystery about this pilgrim,” said Mrs. Maclachlan, as she, upon the morning of the next day, left the sick chamber of Flora, to meet her two Highland friends.

“ Something mysterious indeed,” said Castlecreaghy. “ If this had been the Highlands, I would have concluded that he was no earthly creature : but

here, I suppose, if the devil himself were to pay a visit, we would have to reckon him flesh and blood, and count kin with him."

"It will be long, I hope," said Captain Macintyre, "ere we count kin with this impertinent masker, who well deserves to be kicked, for having not only insulted, but done serious injury to Miss Flora. I wish I knew where to find him ; and then I should not be slow in administering to him that chastisement which his brutality merits."

"He does not seem such a brute either," said the Laird ; "and he told a story about himself, that would have melted the heart of a stone."

"The heart of a fiddle-stick," said the Captain, a good deal nettled that the

Laird was throwing cold water upon his wrath ; “ but the pearls, what could he mean by these ? ”

“ That I cannot tell,” said Mrs. Mac-lachlan ; “ they are like an old set which were exchanged by my dear Flora, for those which she wore last night ; or rather, I should perhaps say, that she lost the old, and had the new given to her.”

“ I understand it all ; I understand it all perfectly,” said Castlecreaghy. “ The pilgrim is an impostor, a common thief. They say that such persons get into all public, and even into some private parties, in London ; and there can be little doubt of what he had been after. Unquestionably, he had stolen the pearls formerly, from seeing that my

cousin was a stranger ; and you may depend upon it, that if he has given them back now, he has taken something else in their stead. Let us examine.”

Mrs. Maclachlan knew what had become of Flora’s pearls ; but she saw no necessity for letting the Laird into the secret, the more especially as that did not promise to afford any clue to the mysterious pilgrim ; she therefore acquiesced in the propriety of making a search.

Her own property was all safe, and so was that of Castlecreaghy and the Captain ; but when Mrs. Maclachlan came to make that search which Flora was incapable of making for herself, one article was missing—namely,

the locket with the miniatures of Glenmore and Strathantin, which Flora was in the constant habit of wearing round her neck ; and, on the part of Castlecreaghy, it was never doubted that this had been purloined by the pilgrim.

It was in vain that Mrs. Maclachlan raised a doubt, upon the ground that this locket was of less intrinsic value than the pearls ; and that a thief, had it been possible for one to get into such a party by a false or stolen ticket, would never make such an exchange ; the laird thereupon declared, that the pictures of Glenmore and Strathantin were, now that the originals were utterly and irrecoverably lost, of more intrinsic value than all the pearls in the world.

Upon this declaration the Laird and the Captain were resolved to act ; and the Captain, as the newest, and, of course, the most active soldier, was to plan the campaign,—which was neither more nor less than to give information at the police-offices, and endeavour, if possible, to trace the depredator. In the formation of this wise scheme, it never occurred, either to the one or the other of the schemers, that they were not in possession of a single mark by which the pilgrim could be identified. They knew nothing of him but the tall figure, the grey cloak, the palmer's staff, and the escallop shell ; and these were too slender data even for the Arguses of Bow Street.

But although their own penetration

would not have prevented their going upon this hopeless errand, that was prevented by another circumstance ; The servant, who went to put in order the carriage in which they had returned from the masquerade, found the locket quite safe within it.

The safety of the locket, which was, from the value which he set upon the two pictures, a great relief to Castlecreaghy, was as great an annoyance to his young friend, who, though resolving, with all his might, not to be in love with Flora, was yet not at all pleased, that she should have a lover in masquerade, of which description he suspected the pilgrim was. This made him the more solicitous that Castlecreaghy should join him in finding

out and chastising that mysterious personage. But, though the two spent three whole days in this business, they left off not one bit the wiser than when they began. Their search was, indeed, needless, as they had not one definite circumstance by which they could trace the object of their inquiry.

The only person who could have given them even a hint of his identity, (and the only hint which she could have given, was the probability of the pilgrim's being one and the same with the muffled figure that had often dogged, and twice threatened or reproached her,) was, in the mean time, heedless of all their proceedings, and lay with her reason suspended, and the hopes of her recovery extremely doubtful.

But it was not decreed, that this sickness, sore and dangerous though it was, should be the final scene of Flora's life. Other reverses and other scenes had been appointed for her, and for these she was spared. Her recovery was slow ; and as the idea of the mysterious figure, in both its garbs, haunted her imagination, the tardiness of her recovery was thereby increased. All the speculation that she could muster, was unable to explain to her who that figure was, or for what purpose it should follow her steps with so much pertinacity, and yet without even hinting at its motive for so doing. Once she had fancied it was a minion of the false Lord Gerald ; but as he was now in his grave, the employment of a spy or a

bravo could not be supposed to proceed from that quarter.

Gladly would she have flattered herself, that the haunting figure and the pilgrim were not the same; and willingly would she have persuaded herself that the latter was a mere masker, who had amused himself by telling her a story; but then came the affair of the jewels, which she recognized well, as being those which the former figure had been supposed to purchase. This too, was, however, but suspicion. Indeed, the whole matter was one of shadows, doubts, and mysteries.

While Flora was perplexed by these conjectures, her health was recovering so slowly, that the physician recommended a change of air; and for this

purpose it was resolved that she should, for some time, go to Mrs. Maclachlan's country house. To this she consented very readily, as there seemed to be in town some dogging disturber, from whom she hoped to be free, if once in the country. London had become painful to her, but still, to part with her relative, and with the friend of Mrs. Maclachlan, who had been, in so polite and so apparently disinterested a manner, her protector, was painful to her feelings. A day was, however, fixed, when the establishment at May Fair should be, for a short time, broken up, and when the friends should set out upon their respective journies: Mrs. Maclachlan and Flora to the retirement of the country seat, Castlecreaghy to

the Highlands, and the young soldier to whatever place was most likely to enable him to break that chain, which, he knew not how, bound him to the unconscious object of his unconfessed admiration. To this, however, a fresh obstacle presented itself.

During the three days which immediately followed the eventful masquerade, the habitation of the General's widow exhibited all the signs of a house of sorrow. The front windows were closed, the knocker was muffled, the street was littered, and the servants stood ready to receive any message that might be brought, lest any incautious noise should protract the sickness of her, in whose recovery they were all so deeply interested. No visitor was ad-

mitted, save those who brought medical aid ; but the inquirers after the state of the fair patient's health, especially by those who had profited by the bounty of her and her patroness, were very numerous and very anxious. There mingled in this crowd, an old beggar, of tall figure, and apparently considerable strength ; but he was bent under a load of years, and his beard, which was as white as snow, reached down almost to his girdle. He was a singular mendicant, for he not only refused the alms of those who passed by, but also what was offered him by the servants of the house. All that seemed to interest him, was the sick lady, for whom he let slip no opportunity of inquiring, and when the tidings were, that she was out of

immediate danger, his satisfaction seemed very great,—greater, indeed, than could have been looked for, from a stranger of his class ; but both ladies at May Fair were in the habit of receiving so many blessings from the objects of their bounty, that this was not heeded by the servants,—and the less so, on account of the anxiety which they felt for the recovery of their young mistress. Nor was the beggar noticed by Castlecreaghy and Captain Macintyre ; for they were so intent upon finding out and chastising the author of the mischief, as to heed little the appearance and inquiries of beggars.

The old mendicant was always at his post, and made his inquiries with the utmost punctuality ; nor did he, for

many days, give the least signs of having any other purpose. At last, however, when his appearance had become quite familiar, he intimated that he wished a petition to be presented to the lady Flora, to admit him a pensioner on her private list ; but that, as he understood she allowed none to be privy to her charities, he wished it to come to the notice of no one save herself. This, too, was so much a matter of course, that it excited no notice, farther than the communicating to the beggar that the lady was not yet in a condition fit for receiving his petition.

“ I can wait till she is, for a poor beggar man’s time is of no great value,” said he ; “ though God grant that, for her own sake, she may soon be

so far recovered as to be able to receive it; but do not tell her that I am, or have been, waiting, for I know it would give her pain to think that she had made even a beggar man, poor and old as I, wait for her bounty."

At length the answer to the beggar's inquiry, was, that Flora was recovered, was able to leave her apartment, and was the next day to set out for the country.

"Then," said the beggar, "this is just the time for presenting my petition. Take it, and as you wish to see a poor man escape from misery, let it be delivered to her in her own room to-morrow morning."

Pat Lanigan, to whom the request was made, and the petition entrusted,

promised, and faithfully performed his mission. Pat was, upon most occasions, fond of a little gossip ; but in the case of Flora's charities, he was silent as the most practised confidant in the world ; perhaps, because a portion of the charity, by this means, came to himself. He concealed the petition carefully, till the time came at which he had promised to deliver it to the lady.

That morning, being the one upon which the friends had resolved to separate, was one of much bustle and preparation. The preparation of Captain Macintyre, which was the most painful of the whole, was, indeed, executed at his own lodgings ; but he was early at May Fair, to breakfast with the family, and bid farewell to Mrs. Maclachlan

and Castlecreaghy, and think farewell to Flora,—for he durst not trust himself with saying those painful syllables to her.

Pat, who, in the bustle of his preparations had nearly forgotten the petition, hastened with it to the apartment of Flora; just as the breakfast bell was about to ring; and tapping gently at the door of her room, he presented the paper.

“What have we got here, Pat?” said Flora.

“Och! and a begging petition, sure,” said he; “from an ould man with beard as long and as white as a napkin, who has been after standing at the door all the time that your ladyship has been ill; and he would not

give his petition to a mother's son but myself, because he knew by the honesty of my face, that I would give it all into your hand, my lady."

"There you did right," said Flora; "I shall have the pleasure of relieving this suppliant, all to myself."

"And sure, my lady, and Pat Lanigan brought you the petition," said he.

"So Pat Lanigan did; and Pat Lanigan shall not be unrewarded for the pleasure that he has thus afforded me," said Flora, giving him his usual fee.

"Long life and an ould soldier's blessing to you, my lady," said Pat; "much may you have to give to the poor, and much to keep yourself: by the powers, if you were in ould Ire-

land, dry would be the Liffy, if they did not find you a festival in the calendar, though a score of the ouldest saints in it should go without."

The bell rang, and Pat descended to his duty, while Flora shut the door of her apartment in order that she might read the petition. The tenor of it was not precisely what Pat had said and herself had anticipated.

When Mrs. Maclachlan had seen that all the household affairs were properly settled, and had given orders to the chambermaid and porter respecting the conducting of matters, while the rest of the family should be absent, she went into the breakfast parlour, where she found the Captain and Castlecreagh, but not her adopted daughter.

Their inquiries for the absentee were reciprocal ; the gentlemen, because they were, though from very different motives, both anxious to take a long farewell ; and the lady, because she had seldom been kept waiting by her adopted daughter.

Pat Lanigan was the first of the servants who answered to the bell ; and upon being desired to ask the maids if they had seen Flora, he answered, “ And sure, madam, I have seen her with my own eyes. Was not it myself that carried up a petition to her, from an ould beggar with a long beard, just seeking a bit of charity, madam, as he knew that she and your ladyship were just after leaving town, and there would not be the like

of yourselves here in it after you were gone.”

“ Very well, Pat,” said Mrs. Mac-lachlan ; and turning to Castlecreeghy, “ There is not one of the many good qualities of our amiable cousin, which pleases me so much as her kindness to the poor ; and yet I sometimes wish that she would be a little more discriminating in the exercise of it. However, as she never exceeds her own allowance, I do not wish to interfere with her ; and so, if you please, we shall take breakfast, and allow her to perform her good work.”

“ Och ! blessing upon you, my lady,” said Pat ; “ and it’s grace before meat with my lady Flora all the days of the year, and all the rest too.”

“Spare us your compliments, Pat, and let her be told that her kinsmen are waiting; anxious to leave town, and determined not to go until they have seen her.”

Pat instantly left the room; and he very soon returned, wringing his hands, and crying, “Och, mercy upon us all! the Lady Flora is kill’t again; and the maids are every soul of them kill’t, taking care of her.”

“What is the matter, Pat?” asked the three in one voice.

“And that is more than the mother of me can tell,” said Pat, still wringing his hands; “but the lady Flora is kill’t any how.”

The parlour was now a scene of confusion. Mrs. Maclachlan, though she

did not attach to the word "kill't" the same dreadful meaning as Castlecreaghy, yet knew that Pat was too old a soldier for giving a false alarm ; and so she hurried to Flora's apartment, as expeditiously as she was able. Castlecreaghy, whose fears outran his sense of decorum, followed, and entered the apartment at the same instant with Mrs. Maclachlan ; and the Captain, who felt to the full as intensely as any of the others, but who was restrained by the very intensity of his feelings, lingered at the door, and listened with the most breathless attention. No sound reached his ear but those of woe. The maids were sobbing, Mrs. Maclachlan was lamenting, and the Laird was loud in his grief ; but amid

the whole sounds of sorrow, he listened in vain for any accent of Flora's voice. This went to his heart like a death knell ; but he feared to intrude.

The scene which Flora's apartment presented, was, indeed, a melancholy one. She herself was leaning upon a couch, insensible to all the attentions of her friends, while Mrs. Maclachlan was chafing her temples, and endeavouring, by every means which skill or tenderness could suggest, to restore her to her senses. Those means were, however, unavailing. Flora continued in the silence, and apparently in the stiffness, of death ; her hands were clenched together, and her eyes, though the lids were not, and would not be, closed, had the appearance which disso-

lution creates. Castlecreaghy was frantic with despair, and unable to render any assistance ; but the Captain, whose wits were more about him, though his feelings were more intensely occupied, flew for the doctor with the rapidity of lightning.

Fortunately, the doctor was met just stepping into his carriage to visit another patient ; but the urgency of the case was such, that in a very few minutes, he was by the side of the daughter of Glenmore. She was still without apparent life ; but he pronounced her to be still alive, though so dreadfully afflicted by hysteria from some mental agitation, that the most prompt application of remedies would be necessary. At the same time, he

intimated, that, while those remedies were in the course of application, the friends of Flora had better quit her apartment, as the only assistance which he would need, would be that of Flora's own attendant and the old house-keeper. Upon this, the surrounding friends left the room, and the doctor proceeded to use means for the restoration of that animation which they feared was suspended for ever.

As our object is to write the annals of human beings, and not the annals of medicine, we shall not describe the means which the doctor used for the recovery of his fair patient. Suffice it to say, that those means were efficient, in so far as the recovery of mere animal existence was concerned ; but

that returning life left the patient deprived, not only of the use of reason, but of all consciousness. When her breathing returned, it was only to give utterance to the most agonizing sighs and the most heart-rending lamentations; and when her eyes opened, it was only to weep. There was again a world for the poor sufferer, but it was a world of shadows, or, if there was any reality in it, it was but the reality of woe.

The exhaustion of the fit and the recovery had so completely worn out Flora, that she sank into a sleep. That sleep was, however, neither balmy nor profound. It was broken by what might have been considered as the external indications of frightful

dreams, and interrupted by the most piteous lamentations and the most touching cries. In consequence of those symptoms, the doctor ordered home his carriage, delegated another to make his calls for him, and resolved to be an inmate at May Fair till Flora should be tranquillized, or, at any rate, out of danger. But as he had no wish to pry into the secrets of the family, he spent his time either in the apartment of his patient, or in one immediately adjoining, and held no communication with the family, except in those bulletins upon the state of Flora, which were demanded of him every two or three minutes, and which he endeavoured to frame, so as to prepare for any result that might ensue, and

yet to alarm the friends of the sufferer as little as possible.

The breakfast, which had been intended to be the last social meal before a temporary separation of those who were dear to each other from the relations of country and of blood, and who had had those ties strengthened and endeared by a reciprocity of kind offices, was allowed to cool upon the table, and the three friends sat for some time looking at each other in speechless agony and astonishment.

This silence was first broken by Castlecreaghy, who vaguely expressed his horror at the scene, and his wonder as to what might be the cause of it.

The Captain ran to the doctor in

order to put the question ; and the answer was, that it must have been something which occasioned the most bitter anguish of the heart, as he had never known a fit of so much severity and obstinacy brought on by a physical cause.

The servants were immediately summoned, and interrogated whether they knew of any thing that had happened to Miss Flora, or any communication that had been made to her. Their answer was, that there had been nothing since the petition of the poor old beggar, the which, they were convinced, could contain nothing more than a supplication for charity, such as they had often carried before both to Flora and to Mrs. Maclachlan. They

added, that the beggar, whose petition had been received, was the most mild, kind, and gentle beggar that had ever come near the house ; for he would take no alms, nor do anything during Flora's late illness, but inquire after her health, and yet he waited from morning till night about the place.

“ He is thus the more likely to be an impostor,” said the Captain ; “ let us go and endeavour to trace him.”

“ That would be but a fruitless task,” said Mrs. Maclachlan ; “ you have no more certain means of finding him, than you had of finding the pilgrim. I shall endeavour to get the petition, and we shall see if there be in

that any means of tracing who this troubler may be; or if we fail in that, we shall at least know what he has done, if indeed he has done any thing."

The counsel of Mrs. Maclachlan, having less of passion in it than that of the Captain, was of course more rational, and, upon that account, more likely to give satisfaction; and the Captain himself had no sooner heard it, than he began to wonder why it had not occurred to him. As for the Laird, he was fairly at his wits' end, and could not solve the mysteries in which the fate of his fair cousin seemed to be involved, without a reference to supernatural agency; and as he had already found that his faith in that agency was not a

plant that would bear to be transplanted into metropolitan soil, he deemed the keeping of it to himself the wisest course, and resolved to abide the issue with as much patience as his nature could carry.

Mrs. Maclachlan entered the apartment of her adopted daughter slowly and cautiously, and approached the couch with a trembling heart. Flora was awake, but her eye was restless, and in its wanderings so rolled upon vacancy at every turn, that all questioning of her, which would of course have been dangerous in her then condition, was rendered impossible. The two female domestics were interrogated as to whether they had seen in the possession

of Flora, when her illness first alarmed them, any paper; but they answered in the negative. The doctor, however, who had slipped into the apartment, to still, as he thought, the unwarrantable noise of the maids,—though that noise consisted of nothing more than one or two soft whispers, threw more light upon the subject. He stated, that while the partial undressing of his patient, which the proper treatment of her case required, had been performing, a paper had fallen from her bosom; and that, lest it should have been any thing not proper for coming to the knowledge of the servants, he had put it under the patient's pillow. Mrs. Maclachlan removed it from thence: it was a pretty

large packet, contained in an envelope, the seal of which had been cut off; and the address was, “ To Flora, Lady ——, the Petition of an *old* Beggar.”

CHAP. XI.

“ As rosy morn brings forth her earliest tint,
From darkest chambers of the gloomy night ;
As from the blackest cloud, the beam of day
Is ever brightest ; so, in human life,
The joys we gather upon sorrow’s brink,
Are evermore the sweetest.”

THIS severe indisposition of Flora, whatever had been its cause, and whatever might be its consequences, had at least this one effect—that it put an end, for the time, to all the projected movements. As she, upon whose account alone Mrs. Maclachlan was to quit May Fair, was now in no condition to quit

her bed, that part of the business was at an end ; while Castlecreaghy, urgently as his presence was required at home, could not return to the mountains of Glenmore with the melancholy intelligence, that she, who would be the fond object of every one's inquiry, was stretched upon a bed of sickness, and haply of death ; and the Captain, who did not choose to avow, and, as we have said, did not choose to let himself know the real cause which bound him to the family in May Fair, remained merely out of compliment to his good friend Castlecreaghy ; or, if he had any other expressible motive, it was, that he would, in case of emergency, be a swifter and surer courier for medical or other aid, than any one else of the family. Under

the influence of these and other motives, the whole of the movements were countermanded, and they all resolved to watch and wait the progress and the issue of Flora's indisposition,—to divine its cause if possible; and if that cause came through the impertinence or the malignity of another, to take such steps as would effectually prevent its recurrence.

The doctor had communicated to Mrs. Maclachlan the fact of the petition's being under Flora's pillow, in such a manner as that it was not observed by the domestics, and the good lady was both so much afraid to look at the contents, and so anxious to communicate them to the two Highlanders, that she looked not at the packet till she had re-

turned to the parlour. There the petition was unfolded, and the contents of it were such, as that no doubt remained of its being the cause of Flora's alarm; and there remained as little wonder that that alarm had been so serious in its effects. Indeed, the tenor of the paper was such, that it drew tears from the eyes of Mrs. Maclachlan, and "curses, not loud but deep," from the mouths of the two Highlanders, who declared that they would follow a wretch, who had attempted to ruin Flora's good name, and who had succeeded in ruining her health, to the uttermost end of the earth.

Who could be the writer, or what the motive of the writing, not one of them could divine. Flora had been courted,

and had declined the hand of many, but these were known to Mrs. Maclachlan as being men of honour ; and besides, Flora had been so mild in her refusals, that no reasonable person could have taken offence at them. It was then suspected that the letter had been written by the pilgrim, and that he had hired this old beggar to deliver it ; but still, who was the pilgrim ? what should he know of one who had lived in so very retired a manner ; and if he had, by accident, heard of her, upon what grounds did he dare to make the dreadful accusations contained in the letter ? But we forget. The reader is yet ignorant of what those accusations were. They were these : in the first place, Flora was accused of faithlessness and fickleness

of character, inasmuch as she could not wait for a few months the return of one to whom she had vowed, in the sight of heaven, that she would be faithful for ever. Next, it accused her of vanity and folly, for having at the first request, and without inquiring into the circumstances, given her heart to a profligate young nobleman. Then came the gall of the whole matter, exhibited in darker and more enigmatical colours, but still sufficiently specific for being understood: it was implied, that Flora had become a mother ere she was a wife; that he whom her offspring was not permitted to call father, nor herself to call husband, had brought her to London, and cast her off: that her child had been lodged for some time in Westminster—

that by some means or other, she had prevailed upon her kinsman to assist in concealing her guilt ; and that when that guilt had been completely veiled, the wages of iniquity had enabled her to win the good will of the mercenary young man to whom she had now been privately married, who was living with her at the house of Mrs. Maclachlan, and who had been of the party with her at the masquerade.

To Mrs. Maclachlan, the tale of these fearful accusations was like the deadly breath of the samiel,—it came in silence, and it came in desolation. It was incomprehensible, and yet there was a unity of parts about it, which had at least the semblance of some foundation. She stood motionless, as if

she wished to question Castlecreaghy, as to whether there had been any point upon which so dreadful an accusation could be hung. She never once supposed that Flora had been guilty to the full extent of this black catalogue ; or, indeed, that she had been guilty at all ; but then there was an incomprehensibility in the matter, which almost made her head giddy.

Castlecreaghy changed to all colours, —that is, all dark colours ; and while Mrs. Maclachlan looked as though she wished to ask, and yet was afraid ; he looked as if he wished to communicate, and was restrained by a similar cause.

The Captain gave vent to his anguish in the strongest imprecations on the slanderer, in so diabolical a manner, of

one who was as lovely as an angel, and virtuous as she was lovely.

The silence and obvious confusion of the Laird worked the good old lady into such a paroxysm of feeling, that she finally demanded of him if there were any circumstances which could, by the twisting and colouring of malice, be tortured into any such form as this. Castlecreaghy saw that there was no way of saving from suspicion the daughter of Glenmore, without disclosing the folly and the fault of poor Isabella ; and as he was bound to silence upon that subject, both by the promise which he had made to Flora, and his desire not to disturb the ashes of a penitent though erring kinswoman, he looked more embarrassed than ever.

Mrs. Maclachlan repeated her question.

“ My cousin Flora is as good, and as innocent as an angel,” said he ; “ she never broke a vow, and she was never guilty of a fault. Is she not even now, when many of the living are sighing after her, mourning for the dead, and refusing to be comforted ? Oh ! that Castlecreaghy should have lived to see the day, when the hope of his name, and the ornament of her sex, has been brought to the gates of death by the lies of an unknown slanderer ; and when even her friends look upon her innocence with hesitation ! Would that she had rather perished with her matchless father ; would that she had left the poor deluded in her misery,

and even not rescued the poor innocent from destruction !” With that he dashed himself into a chair, and there sat in gloomy and dogged silence, like a man bereft of his senses. The Captain stood in another part of the room, cold, and motionless as an Apollo in marble ; and Mrs. Maclachlan was deprived of all power of utterance. The state of each and all of them was painful beyond description, and had it continued, it would have been painful beyond endurance, and the stoutest heart would have been broken, and the best poised mind unhinged under its pressure.

Relief came, however, in a form, which, under any other circumstances, would have been a full measure of

agony. The servant entered the room to say that Flora had awoke from a feverish sleep, to fall into another fit, and that the doctor had requested the presence of Mrs. Maclachlan.

She departed instantly, leaving the two Highlanders in a situation the most painful ; for there came some misgivings across the mind of the Captain himself. But though Castlecreaghy had some hesitation in communicating to Mrs. Maclachlan the real transactions which had enabled the malignant wretch to shape his slander into something bearing at least the external appearance of truth, he had none in confiding them to the young soldier. Therefore he ran over the whole of what had happened to Isabella (for while in Bel-

gium, he had concealed the most painful part); and while this made “assurance double sure” with the Captain; as to the perfect innocence and extreme goodness of Flora, it gave tenfold depth to his vow of vengeance upon the inhuman murderer, it as might be, both of herself and her character. This disclosure also calmed the passions of the Laird, or, at least, it made them likewise all run in the channel of anger and revenge, and that with him, and when the honour of his clan was concerned, was both well-known and deep.

This second fit proved to be one of the operations of the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, and when Flora recovered out of it, the doctor announced a consider-

able alleviation of the more alarming symptoms ; but added, that the most profound silence must be preserved.

Ill at ease as Mrs. Maclachlan was, the idea that Flora would recover was delightful to her ; and it was the more delightful, that it came mingled with the hope, that once recovered, she would be able to explain, in a satisfactory manner, those mysteries which had so completely baffled her friends. Under the impression of this double hope, the good lady returned to the parlour, not a little tranquillized in her mind.

Tranquillity as well as agony is sympathetic, and the new light and life which lit up the countenance of Mrs. Maclachlan imparted itself to her

friends, prepared, as they had been, by the explanation which had been made in her absence.

Seeing that Castlecreaghy was now in a humour to be spoken with, she repeated her question as to whether there was any thing which could have given a colour to the dreadful insinuations contained in the paper ; and he, as had been counselled by the Captain during Mrs. Maclachlan's absence, rehearsed the story of Isabella's misfortunes. The tale was most affecting to the good lady ; but at the same time there was much consolation in some of the circumstances, and the half-formed and momentary shade, which had stolen across the character of Flora, was completely removed ; and that character,

from the kind attention which she had shown to her unfortunate cousin, and the inviolable secrecy which she had kept upon that heart-rending subject, made her appear more lovely and more worthy of all that the good lady had done for her than ever.

Peace of mind being thus restored, in as far as the safety of Flora's character was concerned, the whole of their home exertions were directed to seconding the efforts of the doctor for the recovery of her health ; and the-out-of-doors employment of the two gentlemen, was an unwearied endeavour to find out and chastise the inhuman perpetrator of so much villainy. As, however, they had no means by which they could discover the pilgrim, the only

person to whom suspicion could attach ; and as they had no clue by which he, though discovered, could be connected with the old man with the beard, their labours had little prospect of being crowned with success. As they went along, the Captain had a good deal of trouble in preventing the Laird from interrogating every tall, bearded and hoary Jew, whom they met chaunting the well-known Israelitish hymn of “Old closhe” along the streets.

While they were engaged in this hopeless pursuit, Flora was recovering by very slow degrees, and the injunction was, that she should still not be disturbed upon any account whatever ; hence her adopting mother, whose fondness for her had even increased, stole

upon tip-toe to the room, as she made her frequent visits, and moreover never once hinted at the strange occurrence which had led to so much pain.

The door of the apartment was left a little open, as well for the more free admission of air, as for permitting Mrs. Maclachlan to make those visits without creating alarm. One day, when the good lady had stolen in, in her most quiet manner, she found Flora with the seal of a letter in her hand, which she was alternately gazing upon and kissing; and Mrs. Maclachlan, concluding that there must be some strange history connected with an object in itself so trifling, ere it could merit and meet with so fond an attention, slipped out of the room without

being perceived. As soon as Flora was reported asleep, Mrs. Maclachlan returned to the room, to gratify, if possible, a very excusable curiosity, by a peep at this wonderful relic, but the relic was no where discoverable, and so she had to delay the solution of the mystery.

Upon the same day, the Laird and the Captain encountered near Whitehall a figure, which, from its gait, they pronounced to be the pilgrim. It was wrapped in a military cloak, and wore very large mustachoes. The Laird was for instantly making up to it, and popping the accusation; but the Captain, aware that this would be but the means of frustrating their plan, recommended that they should dog it to its retreat.

The figure passed along Pall Mall, by St. James's Street, to Piccadilly ; and upon arriving there, entered a coach, and gave orders to be driven to the south gate of Kensington Gardens. The Highlanders immediately set off for the opposite gate ; and upon entering the gardens, the Captain, who had still the command, and who was fearful lest the blunt and hasty temper of Castlecreaghy should prevent a discovery, prevailed upon him to linger behind.

The Captain held along the walk for some time, without meeting a single human being. At last he coursed across the gardens at a place where the trees are peculiarly thick ; and passing a clump of underwood, the figure stood right in his way.

The Captain was at a loss how to break silence ; but the strange figure saved him the trouble ; for it eyed him with a look of ineffable scorn and contempt, and most insultingly pronounced these words : “ Poor pitiful barterer of honour for the wages of iniquity, how is your wife ? ”

It was well for one or for both of the parties that the Captain had no arms about him ; for these words to a soldier, and to a soldier of his high honour, would have naturally been fatal to one of them. But though he had no artificial arms, he had those which nature had given him ; and so, with all his might, he aimed a blow at the head of the insulter. The Captain was a man of great activity as well as strength ; but he

was overmatched in both. The stranger stopped the blow, by seizing the Captain by the fore arm, and tossing him from him with so much force, that he dashed him headlong upon the ground.

Castlecreaghy by this time came up; and the Captain demanded an armistice for the purpose of preparing to terminate the affair in an honourable way.

“ Let it be done instantly,” said the stranger, throwing a brace of pistols on the ground, and stepping back as if to measure the distance.

“ You have no second,” said the Captain.

“ By the perfidy of those with whom you are connected, I shall have none to my *name*, and therefore I will have none in my vengeance,” said the stranger.

“Are you the monster who wrote that diabolical paper, which has nearly cost Flora of Glenmore her life?” said the Laird, unable to contain his indignation.

“I am,” replied the other.

“Then I tell you,” said the Laird, “that you are a mean, and cowardly, and lying villain; and that if he who is now in his grave were out of it, you would not have dared to show your face.”

“If *who* were out of his grave? —Lord Gerald de Brooke?”

“D—n him, and you too,” said the Laird; “if young Strathantin were here,—He for whom my matchless cousin has despised the first nobility in the country,—for whom she has

vowed unbroken celibacy, and whose picture she wears always near her heart—he would not stand upon the idle punctilios of a soldier, and hear you speak thus. Stand where you like, and I will take a shot with you.”

“Swear by heaven, that your account is no lie,” said the stranger.

“I will send him to perdition that insinuates it,” said the Laird; “never was lady more loyal to a living husband, than Flora of Glenmore is to her dead Strathantin.”

The stranger dashed from him his pistol, tore away his cloak, and removed his artificial beard; “Then the *living* Strathantin has been grossly abused, and under the madness thence

resulting, he has insulted men of honour ; and, O heaven ! done injury to Flora of Glenmore.”

An eclaircissement followed, by which it appeared that Lord Gerald had not only invented the tale of Strath-antin’s death, but had contrived to make that of Flora’s infidelity meet him at every point of the continent. It had also been confirmed to him in London ; and he related a story, which he had been made to believe, and which was, in all respects, similar to that contained in the letter. Mutual explanations appeased, if they did not please all parties ; and the only thing that required management, was the breaking of the matter to Flora ; and this, at

the suggestion of the Laird, was to be left to the wisdom and discretion of Mrs. Maclachlan.

Thus the affair, which at the beginning, had appeared the certainty of a duel, ended in the more rational and comfortable certainty of a dinner; and the time till then was spent by Strathantin in putting ten thousand questions to the Laird, while the Captain went to inform Mrs. Maclachlan.

He found her alone, studying the arms upon the wax, which she had at last found; and those arms, which were the arms of Strathantin, smoothed the way to the communication which the Captain had to make.

The Captain forgot both his hapless love and his hapless overthrow; and

Strathantin was found to be worthy of all the fondness with which Flora had cherished his memory. The friendship between him, the Laird, and the Captain, grew closer and closer every day ; and as soon as it was safe, he was introduced at May Fair. Need we—can we describe the meeting ?

CHAP. XII.

“Farewell! Othello’s occupation’s gone!”

THE remainder of our history may be brief; because we hope that our fair readers, either have had, or will have, far more experience in the happiness which followed this recovery from the grave, than in the miseries and reverses by which that unlooked-for event was preceded.

After the first agitation, produced by the return of him who had been so long, and, as it was believed, so hope-

lessly lost, had subsided, Flora rapidly regained her health, and along with that, the natural gaiety of her spirits, which had been a stranger to her for so many days. Pleasure reigned in the mansion at May Fair; and not the least happy of its inmates was the good and generous Mrs. Mac-lachlan.

As there was now no occasion for delay, on account of any of the few remaining incumbrances upon the lands of Glenmore, and as delay was but a procrastination of that felicity for the permanence of which the parties had, through a long absence, shown themselves to be so well qualified, preparations were made for the nuptials. There was one, however, without

whose presence, upon that occasion, Flora would have thought her happiness incomplete. This was the lively and now happy Emma, who, together with her reformed and loving lord, was upon the continent.. She was written to ; and, as Lord Fitz Arthur thought that a few months sporting in the keen air of the Highlands would be to the full as wholesome both for his health and his habits, as a similar stay upon the continent,—and as his Emma would enjoy what she had been deprived of there—the society of the fond and faithful companion of her youth, his lordship at once agreed ; indeed, he proposed that they should instantly return and be present at the ceremony.

That ceremony was performed ere many weeks had elapsed ; and as Mrs. Maclachlan had stipulated that a few days or weeks should be spent at her country seat, ere they took their journey to the land of their fathers, Castlecreaghy was deputed to the Highlands to announce the joyful event, and make the requisite preparations throughout the clan and castle of Glenmore, for the reception of the new Chief and his lovely bride.

The Laird had no sooner seen the ceremony performed at St. George's Church, and toasted a dozen healths in as many bumpers of wine, than he set off for Scotland, big with the importance of his joyous mission. He remained a day in Edinburgh to propa-

gate the glad tidings; tidings which were gall and worm-wood, not only to the scribes in Great King Street, but to some others, who, not having heard of Strathautin since the time of Glenmore's misfortune, found their expectations cut off by his re-appearance.

When the Laird reached the mountains, his own importance, and the satisfaction which the message wherewith he was charged, communicated, knew no bounds. He crossed the loch, with pipes playing and colours flying; the clan was assembled; and lest the couple, upon their arrival, should be too much occupied with their own affections and attention to their titled guests by whom they were to be accompanied, to have a "house heating" in the

true Highland style, he anticipated it by many practisings.

It seemed, too, that a new dawn of taste had come upon him ; for the repairing and the ornamenting of the castle, of which he was director, if not principal architect, exceeded the splendour even of what had been done when Flora's mother arrived to be the joy of the old Chief and the boast of the clan and neighbourhood.

Little Mary, to whom the care of young Charles Edward had been committed, had found her Highland lover faithful at her return, and to guard against a fresh separation, they had been made one. Old Rory, too, seemed to bid defiance to time, and really looked younger upon this unexpected

return of good fortune to the clan, than he had done for many years. In a word, the whole of the old domestics were in an instant at their post, and the whole of the wide-spreading domains of Glenmore and Strathantin sent up one song of thanksgiving, and were occupied in one bustle of preparation. Nor was there any thing to do about the castle, for which a number of rival volunteers were not contending.

The only person who felt not altogether at his ease upon the occasion, was Captain Macintyre ; but he had, from the first, curbed the growth of his involuntary admiration for Flora ; and the tie which bound her to Strath-

antin, was one, which no honourable man could have wished to see broken or loosened. He therefore joined in the good wishes which were rained upon the happy couple; and having, through the joint influence of Mrs. Maclachlan and Strathantin, obtained a majority and a command in India, he bade adieu to his friends and his country, with the most glowing prospects, and the light heart of a soldier.

The merchant, with whose family Flora had for some time ceased to be familiar, but who had, unknown to her, been the means of detecting and setting aside some of the fraudulent claims upon Glenmore, now called to offer his congratulations; and as he

had proved a friend in adversity, he was welcomed as a relative in prosperity.

During the three weeks that Strathantin and his Flora spent at the country seat of Mrs. Maclachlan, Lord Fitz Arthur was arranging his affairs, so that he and his Emma might spend the summer in Scotland; and when the time of the departure drew near, the good-widow declared that she was now too old and too fond of solitude and retirement for relishing the fatigues even of her comparatively retired life in the capital. She therefore offered to accompany her adopted son and daughter to Glenmore, and spend the evening of life among those healthy

and romantic solitudes where she had spent its morning.

This proposal was too congenial to the feelings of Flora for being rejected ; and so the good old lady pensioned her servants, let her houses, and prepared for her journey.

The day for commencing that journey arrived, and the company set out for Scotland.

When they arrived in the Scottish metropolis, the splendour of their equipages, the dignity of their personal appearance, and still more the rumour of their wealth, would have drawn round them, as fawning sycophants, those who had treated Flora with treachery or neglect when she

was friendless ; but she knew the hollow and selfish nature of their proffered services, and treated them with the indifference which they deserved.

They passed through the Lowlands without meeting other attention than the gaping of the people at the grandeur of so unusual a train ; but when they came to the Highlands, and especially when they entered the lands of Strath-antin, along which they had to pass in the way to the castle of Glenmore, they were met by a more hearty and affectionate welcome. It is true, the horses were not taken from their carriages, and these drawn by the people ; but something as necessary and more rational was done. The men were everywhere employed either in repairing the

roads, or in absolutely making them, and the women and children came out *en masse* to bless them as they went along. On the borders of the Glenmore estates, they were met by five hundred chosen men, of the two clans, with their tartans mixed, the tree of both in their bonnets, and linked hand in hand, and shoulder to shoulder, in alternate files; and from this point, to the margin of Lochmore, it was all playing of pipes, firing of muskets, and songs and shouts of joy.

New boats had been constructed for wafting them across, and the scene upon the water was truly magnificent. Nor did the old castle form the least interesting part of the scene. Crowned with the double tree and the double

banner, vollying forth the welcome guns from its battlements, and having its bold and beetling summit thronged by the principal people of both clans, it looked more gay, and more the scene of real and unmixed festivity, than it had done for many years. The happy and honoured company landed. The carriages were drawn up by a road which had been made for the express purpose; they entered the court of the castle; the oldest matron of the clan, according to the good old custom, broke more cakes over the head of Flora, than had been broken over those of all the young brides in the Highlands for a dozen of years; and she entered the halls of her fathers, amid the warlike sounds of a hundred

bagpipes, and the joyous voices of a thousand of those faithful and devoted people, to whom the safe return of herself and her accomplished husband was the source of inexpressible happiness.

In the banquet, which had been prepared, Castlecreaghy took care that he lacked not for a fresh “house heating,” and the table extended farther without the hall, and had more, both above the salt and below it, than had been known in the Highlands within the memory of man.

The novelty, and yet more the unbounded happiness and unrestrained cordiality of the scene, were equally new and delightful to Lord and Lady Fitz Arthur; and his Lordship declared, that a whole life of the heartless

splendour and unmeaning dissipation of the metropolis, did not amount in real enjoyment, to one day of Highland hospitality.

Even the very mountains seemed to have been kindled by the fires of joy ; for no sooner had evening begun to close, than they were gleaming in one blaze of dazzling light. Morning too brought no languor, and no painful remembrances of the merry feast. Joy was in every eye, and health bloomed upon every cheek ; and for many days the scene of mirth and hearty festivity was renewed, and seemed to catch fresh spirit at every renewal.

When it was judged that this indoor pleasure might pall upon their noble guest, the sports of the field were

proposed, agreed to, and prosecuted in the true Highland style. In a word, there was not one of the many fascinations of a country all picturesque, and a people all spirit, but was called into requisition.

No one was more happy or more esteemed than Mrs. Maclachlan, whose youth seemed to return with her return to the land of her fathers ; and though she was obliged to pay many and long visits to her own kindred and clan, yet Glenmore Castle was the home of her heart—the place where she wished and had resolved to spend the evening of her days ; and no where could she have been more welcome, or more comfortable ; for she had been more than a mother to Flora, in the days of her

adversity, and now, in the days of prosperity, both Flora and her husband were more than children to her.

Lord and Lady Fitz Arthur lingered far longer than persons of their rank usually continue in so remote a part of the country; and when they were at last forced to take their departure, they did it with reluctance, and after having entered into an express agreement, to exchange annually a long visit with the Chief and Lady of the united clans of Glenmore and Strathantin.

When the visitors had taken their departure, and when the more tranquil business of life succeeded the festivities, the new Chief set about adopting every means for improving the condition of his people: and, seconded as he was by

the counsels of his wife, and the activity of Castlecreaghy, those means were crowned with every success.

The year ran its course, with no diminution of honey in all its thirteen moons; and upon the anniversary of the day of the landing, the feast was again spread, and the bonfires kindled, because an heir to the estates had been baptized, and his recovered and blooming mother had been able to make her appearance in public. Upon this occasion there was nobody so happy as little Mary, who had so far got the start of her mistress in the duties of a mother, that she could afford to nurse the young heir of Glenmore, without the least injury or inconvenience to herself or her offspring.

So closed the chequered and eventful period of the history of Flora of Glenmore; so rose a brave clan to greater happiness than ever, at a time when nothing but misery had been felt or feared. What remained was more for enjoyment than for description; but the result conveys a lesson well worthy of being learned, and the whole exhibits a pattern well worthy of being imitated. If any lady feels misfortune, or fancies that in untoward circumstances her comfort is at an end let her hold fast her fidelity and her hopes, and think upon the ultimate happiness, which, after so many sorrows, awaited her who was, in the end, completely blest in him whom she had long mourned as in his grave, but

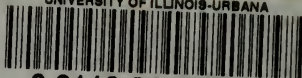
to whom she had been true even in the face of death. Patience and fidelity have not only an abundant reward in themselves, but they scarce ever fail to meet their additional and proper recompense.

THE END.





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